

AZULES Y COLORADOS

ARMED CONFRONTATIONS IN THE ARGENTINE
ARMED FORCES, 1962-63



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ABBREVIATIONS

ARA	Armada de la República Argentina/Argentine Navy	FN	Fabrique nationale d'Herstal/Herstal National Factory (Belgium)
BAM	Base Aérea Militar/Military Air Base	GADA-1	Grupo de Artillería de Defensa Aérea/Air Defence Artillery Group
BAR	Browning Automatic Rifle	GAN	Gran Acuerdo Nacional Argentino/Argentine National Grand Agreement
CB	Grupo de Caza-Bombardeo/Fighter-Bomber Group	NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
CGT	Confederación General de Trabajadores/General Confederation of Workers	OAS	Organisation of American States
CONINTES	Conmoción Interna del Estado/State Internal Commotion	PAM 1/2	Pistola Ametralladora Modelo 1/2. Submachine gun model 1/2
CONSUFA	Consejo Supremo de las Fuerzas Armadas/Supreme Council of the Armed Forces	RI	Regimiento de Infantería/Infantry Regiment
EA	Ejército Argentino/Argentine Army	RIM	Regimiento de Infantería de Marina/Marine Infantry Regiment
ESMA	Escuela de Mecánica de la Armada/Navy Mechanics School	UCRI	Unión Cívica Radical Intransigente/Intransigent Civic Radical Union
FAA	Fuerza Aérea Argentina/Argentine Air Force	UCRP	Unión Cívica Radical del Pueblo/People's Civic Radical Union
FAL	Fusil Automatique Léger/Light Automatic Rifle		
FMA	Fábrica Militar de Aviones/Military Aircraft Factory		

FOREWORD

Imagine that as a spectator you watch a movie, one that shows a surreal vision of your own country. As the projection progresses, surrealism becomes reality and from a spectator, you become a protagonist. In Argentine politics, anything can happen. Then imagine your army, the one that you were always told was created to defend your country from external invasions, but instead the military commanders decided to take the troops out into the streets, with absolute disregard for the civilians. So you, as a citizen, are now involved in a civil war that you do not understand. Worse still, the two factions face each other like in a medieval war, they can see and count each other and above all, both sides respond to the same flag.

Azules y Colorados (Blues and Reds) comes from a terminology used historically in the study of military science, to designate the hypothetical sides that face each other in a simulated war. The Azul chess pieces are your own and the Colorado ones are the enemy's. Between 1962 and 1963 the hypothetical situation became a reality, and the chess board was the streets of Buenos Aires where some pieces spilled blood. A fracture had been brewing in the Argentine Armed Forces for some time, since the 1955 coup that overthrew President Perón. The origin of the dispute was found in the different positions held by the high command, against Peronism and Perón himself, whose followers belonged to the so-called majority working class. The Army Cavalry and the Air Force were the Azules who sought to incorporate the Peronist sectors in order to govern with greater democratic credibility, while the Navy and the Army

Infantry were the Colorados, who have always been to the right of the right and wanted to ban Peronism forever, and they considered themselves part of the aristocracy. Ironically, both belligerent forces were anti-Peronist and anti-communist.

Here the reader is told about the confrontations, some of them violent, which took place for a few days, on two different dates throughout a year, between the factions of Azules and Colorados. They would be in different places of the great Buenos Aires, before a citizenry that looked with curiosity and astonishment, but indifferent. The final combat that defined this fight, where more lives were lost, was also like a medieval war, where armies faced each other in a place where there was no civilian population. It involved the Magdalena C-8 Cavalry Tank Regiment and its neighbouring Punta Indio Naval Aviation Base, located in the immensity of an unpopulated pampas where just a few ranches animated the countryside. A winner emerged, the Azul side, the same one who years later seized power and installed the dictatorship that began in 1976.

Esteban Raczyński
Argentine Aviation Historian and Spotter

INTRODUCTION

Azules y Colorados is the name by which a series of armed confrontations between two factions of the Argentine Armed Forces is known in that country, in the years 1962 and 1963, during the de facto presidency of José María Guido. The clashes settled the open internal struggle in the armed forces after the civil-military coup of 1955 that overthrew the constitutional government of Juan Domingo Perón, to define the profile and position that the military should have in the Argentine political organisation.

Both groups shared Argentina's alignment with the United States in the Cold War and agreed on the need to combat communism, but they disagreed on the attitude to take with Peronism and the professional profile that the Armed Forces should have. The Azules proposed a limited integration of Peronism into Argentine political life and Armed Forces with a high degree of autonomy and unified through a strict chain of command. Among the Azules, the nationalist sectors predominated, where most of the officers were from the cavalry and artillery, although there were also officers of other arms, including the Air Force. The Colorados equated Peronism with Communism, advocating the complete eradication of both, and were characterised by a greater politicisation of the military and some deliberative inner workings. Among the Colorados were mostly infantry and Navy officers. Both coincided, however, in their profound anti-Peronism and anti-communism.

By 1962, each side was fighting to gain control over the entire Armed Forces and thus be in a position to exercise guardianship over the government and set the course that national policy should

follow. Politically, the radicals of the people (Balbinistas, with Ricardo Balbín as their leader) were closer to the Colorados, while the intransigent radicals (Frondistas, with ex-President Arturo Frondizi as their leader) were closer to the Azules. The combats included the participation of civilian commandos, mainly on the Colorado side.

The names Azules y Colorados appeared during the fighting in September 1962 and have their origin in the terminology used historically in the study of military science, to designate the two hypothetical sides facing each other in a simulated war.

The confrontation between the two groups was expressed in several episodes and two armed clashes, the first took place between 19 and 22 September 1962, and the second between 2 and 5 April 1963. The military files contain information on the death of 24 combatants from both sides, while 87 were injured, all of them in the second confrontation. Eyewitnesses reported the existence of several additional dead and wounded in both confrontations, most of them civilians, their deaths never made official. The fighting in April 1963 established the victory of the Azules, dominated by the chiefs of the Army Cavalry and the leadership of General Juan Carlos Onganía, over the whole of the Armed Forces and the civil and ecclesiastical sectors that supported the so-called Military Party. Three years later, Onganía would impose the first permanent civil-military de facto government in Argentine history.

Antonio Luis Sapienza Fracchia
Asunción, September 2022

1

BACKGROUND

The military confrontation that took place in September 1962 and April 1963 was one of the most controversial events in Argentina's busy history. Two factions clashing violently despite being moved by identical ideals and interests. Markedly anti-communist, ultra-Catholic, nationalist and totalitarian, they united both their exacerbated rejection of Peronism and its leader, whom they had overthrown in 1955 after a brief but bloody coup d'état in which there were as many dead and wounded as in the Falklands South Atlantic conflict later in 1982.

Peronism

Between 1943 and 1945, a political current arose in Argentine society that would adopt the name of Peronism, which was characterised by a broad popular and working class base, the latter organised in unions, which promoted a process of industrialisation, redistribution of wealth and expansion of social rights and the middle classes, based on the active intervention of the State. The Peronist Party, with the candidacy of General Juan Domingo Perón, won, with widespread support, two consecutive presidential elections in 1946 and 1951 and was overthrown in 1955 by a coup d'état that imposed the civil-military alliance called the *Revolucion Libertadora* (Liberating Revolution), preceded by the massacre of the bombing raid on the crowds in Plaza de Mayo by Naval Aviation



Argentine President Lieutenant General Juan Domingo Perón, who was overthrown by a military coup in September 1955. (Archivo General de la Nación)

planes. The planes not only bombed the Casa Rosada but also the large and crowded square in front of the government palace,

From the very moment that Perón was overthrown, the coup plotters and their supporters began to discuss what position should

they adopt against Peronism, with the emergence of two differentiated 'sectors' in all spheres; a hard anti-Peronist sector, also known as gorillas or anti-integrationists, who wanted to eradicate Peronism, and on the other hand there was an integrator sector, also known as legalists, who wanted the integration of Peronism into Argentine political life, with variations in the degree of integration, mainly around the possibility of allowing or not allowing Perón to present his candidacy again. The different approach to Peronism caused the internal division of the main political actors. This happened both in the Radical Civic Union/UCR (Frondizi and Balbín) and the Socialist Party (Palacios and Américo Ghioldi). In the Armed Forces, the division between both tendencies placed the Navy and the Army Infantry and Engineers, predominantly in the anti-integrationist side, while the legalists were concentrated in the Army Cavalry and later also in the Air Force. Among the provinces, Córdoba stood out for the "exacerbated anti-Peronist sentiment" of broad civil and military sectors.

The government that replaced that of Perón followed the dictatorial line of its predecessor, although in another direction, adopting much more drastic measures, including the executions of 1956 and the banning of the Peronist movement. However, when it came to restoring the 1853 Constitution, it included the right to strike that the 1949 Magna Carta had obviated.

Cold War and Counter-Revolutionary War

Starting in 1956, Argentine and French officers began to teach classes at the Escuela Superior de Guerra (Army War School) on revolutionary war. The new approaches began to modify the World War II paradigm that until then had prevailed in the Argentine Army and to be oriented towards the concern for a counter-revolutionary war and for an atomic war, which was already shaping a bipolar world faced in a Cold War.

France had lost its colonies in Vietnam, Southeast Asia, after the traumatic defeat at the battle of Dien Bien Phu in 1954 and was developing the new concepts of counter-revolutionary warfare to apply them in the Algerian War of Independence (1954–1962), which put the emphasis on the use of torture to obtain information, with a strong invocation of Catholic fundamentalism. The so-called French School began to spread among the Argentine Armed Forces, even before it did in the United States, to the point that the first counter-revolutionary war course, inaugurated by President Frondizi, was held in Argentina in 1961.

In this context, in a world divided into communists and anti-communists, the existence of an internal enemy was raised within the Armed Forces, in the case of Argentina this was Peronism, through which communism could enter to the country. From these ideas, with the advice of the French military, would originate the CONINTES (Internal Commotion of the State) plan that Frondizi would approve in 1959.



The Argentine Army War School in Buenos Aires. (Public Domain)

Among the professors who stood out at the Army War School at that time were General Osiris Villegas, author of the book *Communist Revolutionary War* (1963) – the first published on this subject – and the lawyer Mariano Grondona.

Politicisation and Professionalism of the Armed Forces

The strong anti-Peronist definition that Aramburu and Rojas imposed on the *Revolucion Libertadora* had the effect of introducing politics into the barracks. Captains and lieutenants discussed the political lines of the regime as equals with their superiors. The result was the almost complete breakdown of the military hierarchy and a generation of permanent conflicts, which were visible throughout the Frondizi Government. At some point, the generals came to vote among themselves to appoint the Secretary of War.

Some military sectors then began to question the politicisation of the Armed Forces, as a situation that threatened their very existence, in addition to making them vulnerable to infiltration. Little by little, during the Frondizi Government, the military began to group into one faction more politicised and openly anti-Peronist, and another one more in favour of a professional profile, which also adopted the nickname of legalists at that time, proposing less commitment to the vagaries of political forces. One of the consequences of the loss of prestige of the military institutions was the fall in prestige of the military vocation and this was evidenced by the number of graduates of the Military School. In the class of 1960 only 68 second lieutenants graduated, the lowest figure since the 1910s.

Simultaneously, after World War II, the Argentine Armed Forces were undergoing a process of change, mainly in the Army, as a result of the disappearance of the use of the traditional cavalry on horseback and the structural transformations imposed by mechanisation and the use of tanks and armour. This affected the organisation of the Army in its five main arms and the balance between them: Cavalry, Infantry, Artillery, Engineers and Communications. The creation of a third armed force in 1945, the Argentine Air Force, was part of this process of change and alteration of the internal balance of the military sector.

The technical transformations influenced the political balance within the Armed Forces. The Navy had shown a uniformly anti-Peronist profile and had emerged as the victorious force in the coup d'état that overthrew the government led by Perón. In the Army,



The Argentine Armed Forces de-Germanised their uniforms and helmets especially after the *Revolucion Libertadora* of 1955 and adopted a more American like uniform and helmet. (Public Domain)

on the contrary, only the cavalry showed a strong anti-Peronist tendency. Although the Cavalry was greatly affected after it had led the attempted coup of 1951, which was defeated and resulted in the dismissal, imprisonment and exile of most of its officers.

The technical and political weakening of the Cavalry allowed the Argentine Navy to acquire greater power within the Armed Forces, to the detriment of the rest of the Army. The situation of internal crisis in the Army worsened further after the overthrow of Perón in 1955 because most of the high-ranking officers were dismissed because of pressure from their subordinates, while the officers who participated in the 1951 coup, flatteringly defined as old anti-Peronists, were reinstated in the Army. Seventy-five percent of major generals and brigadier generals were discharged. In this process, the infantry arm was the most affected, since its discharged commanders were hardly replaced.

Finally, in those years and in those conditions of doctrinal confusion and role crises in traditional weapons, the formation development of the armoured forces began to develop, in which the soldiers of the Cavalry leaned towards the tank, while the infantry moved towards the semi-tracked vehicle for transporting troops. The leader of the Azules, General Onganía, belonged to the Cavalry and referred to the backwardness of the Army in those years, relating that in 1959 his commander told him that he would have to shoot him before the cavalry abandoned the horse...¹

After the *Revolucion Libertadora*, the Armed Forces began a huge reorganisation after the purge of all Peronist sympathiser officers and NCOs. The concept was to professionalise the Armed Forces keeping political ideologies away from garrisons, detachments, military institutes and military bases. This ran parallel to the fragmentation of the State, through which each arm of the Armed Forces, faced with the crisis of leadership of the Military, was left to set its own doctrines and objectives. These objectives, re-establishing the principle of authority after the clashes between Azules and Colorados, were embodied in the 1964 reform that structured the Army as it is known today and in which the Armoured Cavalry, created in 1961 as a result of the absorption of the armoured forces by the cavalry arm, was its most important feature. The reorganisation was partly accomplished but differences continued and these were to lead to the confrontations between Azules and Colorados in 1962–1963.



Vice President Admiral Isaac Rojas (first from the left) and President General Pedro E. Aramburu (first from the right) during the government of the *Revolucion Libertadora* (1955–1958). (Public Domain)

General Aramburu and Admiral Rojas

The self-styled *Revolucion Libertadora* that overthrew the constitutional government presided over by Perón in 1955, ended up being jointly led by two men with the positions of President and Vice President, General Pedro Eugenio Aramburu and Admiral Isaac Rojas, representing the Army and the Navy, respectively. For the first time, the Argentine Navy reached the highest levels of power. Both officers, Aramburu and Rojas, retained a strong personal enmity in the following years, which expressed the struggle between the Army and the Navy for power, which in turn would characterise Argentine political life for the following two decades. The Navy would remain tightly united behind the figure of Rojas, with a strong anti-Peronist position and in favour of the dictatorship, while in the Army, the figure of Aramburu, who intended to be elected as President of a civilian constitutional government with a limited integration of Peronism, did not achieve the same level of unanimity.

Arturo Frondizi

The military sectors led by General Pedro Eugenio Aramburu and Admiral Isaac Rojas took power during the *Revolucion Libertadora* of 1955, and imposed a strict plan of persecution and de-peronisation of the country, ruling until 1958. The previous year it called for elections and the intransigent radical, Arturo Frondizi, emerged as the winner, with a majority of Peronist votes. Frondizi had secretly established an alliance with Perón for the elections, softened the measures taken by the hard-line anti-Peronist sectors and opened the doors to the re-entry of Peronism into political and trade union life.



The Military Junta that overthrew President Frondizi: From left to right, Army Lieutenant General Raúl Poggi, Air Force Brigadier General Cayo Antonio Alsina and Navy Admiral Agustín Penas. (Public Domain)



President Arturo Frondizi (1 March 1958 to 29 March 1962). (Archivo General de la Nación)

The mandate of the new President was characterised by his strong spirit of development and by a strong industrial growth based mainly on foreign capital. Numerous companies settled in the country, almost all of them from the United States, and for a time it seemed that the much-needed economic revival was becoming a reality. But the military never forgave Frondizi for the secret pact he had established with Perón to enable his coming to power, for the contracts he signed with American oil companies, for the lifting of the ban on Perón's political party, or for opening diplomatic relations with Cuba and having received first Fidel Castro and then later Che Guevara.

During the Frondizi regime, the different internal sectors of the Armed Forces sought to improve their relative positions through the support of the non-commissioned officers of the Argentine Army.

The victory of the trade unionist Andrés Framini in the union elections of 18 March 1962 and his opposition to the expulsion of Cuba from the OAS (Organisation of American States), besides the victory of Peronism in the legislative and gubernatorial elections in several provinces, including Buenos Aires, were the proverbial last straw. The hard-line anti-Peronist sectors, headed by the Navy, refused to accept the results of the election, and 11 days later Frondizi was also overthrown by a civil-military coup led by Lieutenant

General Raúl Alejandro Poggi, who was supported by Admiral Agustín Penas and Brigadier General Cayo Antonio Alsina, a predicted outcome after the endless succession of military proposals that the President began to endure from the very moment of his taking office. That 29 March, Frondizi was arrested and taken to Martín García Island, off the Uruguayan coast, where he remained in a comfortable exile for a year and a half in one of the many residences in the town, surrounded by nature, abundant vegetation and the waters of the River Plate. This

event left the country even more confused and divided. Between 1 April and 1 October 1962, the army suffered the impact of the chaotic situation that followed Frondizi's ousting in the frequent shifts of the high command. The post of Army Commander-in-Chief was held by four different generals in the six months, Poggi, Loza, Lorio and Onganía, and five generals held the position of Chief of Staff, Spirito, Cordini, Túrolo, Labayrú and Salas Martínez. From 54 generals on active duty, only 19 were kept in service while the others were put into retirement.

José María Guido

The elections were annulled and once again, the constitutional order was interrupted. General Poggi was preparing to assume the Presidency when, in a quick manoeuvre, the Minister of the Supreme Court, Julio Oyhanarte, took the President of the Senate to the Palace of Justice and had him sworn in, narrowly preventing the military from taking command. A clever manoeuvre by Frondizi managed to get the intransigent radical José María Guido sworn in as President, before the putsch leaders, led by General Raúl Poggi from the Colorado side, installed a Military Junta, but Guido remained completely subject to the so-called Military Party, and Poggi continued as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. It was a masterful move that narrowly avoided a real catastrophe. José María Guido was a serene, calm man, a lawyer, born in Buenos Aires on 29 August 1910, although he lived in the province of Río Negro, for which he had won a seat in the Senate in the national elections of 1958.

The hard-line sector of the Armed Forces concentrated in the Navy and the Army Engineers remained in the main positions of power, with General Marino Carrera as Secretary of War, and General Raúl Poggi (Army Engineers) as Commander-in-Chief of the Army, while General Armando P. Martijena (also Army Engineers), held the position of Head of Military Manufacturing. From these positions, the military leadership supervised the actions of President Guido and reserved the power to remove him if he did not meet their expectations. General Martijena, together with Generals Juan C. Reyes and Carlos J. Túrolo, had drawn up in March 1962 a plan of drastic economic, social and political reforms.

Opposite this sector was the legalist side, concentrated in the Cavalry, which sought to eliminate political deliberation within the Armed Forces, and re-establish the chain of command, to form a



President José María Guido (29 March 1962 to 12 October 1963). (Archivo General de la Nación)

Gone were Rogelio Frigerio and the secret pact with Perón, the student confrontations over secular or free education laws, the breaking of diplomatic relations with Tel Aviv (caused by the kidnapping of Adolf Eichmann by an Israeli commando group that violated Argentine sovereignty), the Antarctica Treaty, the imposition of Álvaro Alsogaray and Roberto Alemann as Ministers of Economy, the CONINTES plan that submitted any attempt at rebellion to military courts (and once again prohibited strikes), the recognition of the Cuban revolution, oil contracts with multinational oil companies, the economic agreements with the Soviet Union, labour policy, the increase in trade union activity and the first hints of subversion. Diplomatic relations with Israel were later restored.

professional and unified military profile subject to the constitutional regime in power.

Law 252 on headlessness of the Executive Branch prevented General Poggi from assuming the presidency. As was previously stated, in his place was Guido, who since the resignation of Vice



Top row, Azul leaders: From left to right: Lieutenant General Juan Carlos Onganía, Lieutenant General Pascual Pistarini, Lieutenant General Julio Alsogaray and Colonel Alcides López Aufranc.

Bottom row, Colorado leaders: From left to right: Brigadier General Juan Carlos Lorio, Major General Federico Toranzo Montero, Brigadier General Bernardino Labayrú, Lieutenant General Arturo Ossorio Arana and Admiral (Ret.) Isaac Rojas. (Public Domain)

President Alejandro Gómez, had presided over the Upper House of the Parliament.

Guido promised to respect the military's orders, and apparently he did so in writing, annulling the elections of 18 March and intervening in the provinces in which Perón's Justicialist Party had won. Immediately afterwards, he broke off relations with Cuba, joined the blockade imposed by the United States and even sent forces to the Caribbean.

Since the civilian President was subservient to the military commanders, it is not difficult to imagine that, given the characteristics of the Argentine temperament, rivalries arose within the Armed Forces, even when they agreed in ideology and position. Despite the fact that both claimed the ideology of the *Revolucion Libertadora*, the two antagonistic positions within them germinated, from prudent initial proposals, to ending in violent action.

It was said that those who recognised the late General Eduardo Lonardi and his motto 'Neither winners nor losers,'² were in favour of an opening that would allow Peronism limited access to political activity, while those who followed the most orthodox guidelines, the so-called gorillas, completely rejected the idea, denying the followers of the deposed leader any participation. For the former, a call for elections was inevitable, hence the need to sit down and talk, while for the latter any possibility of understanding was impossible because, for them, Peronism represented a threat as dangerous as, or even more than, communism. For that reason, in the middle of the Cold War, they believed it necessary to keep it away from power and, if possible, eliminate it.

Short-sighted people, incapable of reasoning, did not see that the left wing of the Justicialist Party was just a small fraction of adventurers, oblivious to the ideology and thinking of their leader,

which they could have neutralised just by sitting down to talk. They did not seem to understand what the exiled leader really was: the clearest expression of fascism in America, opposed to Marxism and any expression of the left, as much or more than them. It was only necessary to negotiate with him and reach an agreement to avoid the catastrophe of the seventies and put the country on the path of peace. Some authors insist on affirming that the socialist line always existed in Peronism and that the social conquests and the defence of the proletariat were due to it.

As mediocre and flat as the military itself, these achievements were the exclusive heritage of the left when the regimes that were imposed in Italy, Germany and Austria in the twenties and thirties raised the proletariat to unthinkable levels. These social programmes and this philosophy were those that Perón applied from 1943.

The side in favour of opening up to Peronism was called Azul and proposed what was called a "Peronism without Perón." They were led by General Juan Carlos Onganía, Commander of the Armoured Division and the Campo de Mayo Cavalry Corps, and he was supported by high-ranking Army officers such as General Pascual Pistarini, Chief of the Cavalry, General Julio Alsogaray, Commander of the Armoured Cavalry Division Nr.1, and Colonel Alcides López Aufranc, commander of the C-8 Tank Regiment.

The Colorados were led by Generals Juan Carlos Lorio, Bernardino Labayru, José Octavio Cornejo Saravia, Arturo Ossorio Arana, Navy Captain Santiago Sabarots and several Admirals, Rojas among them, who demanded at all costs a series of removals that included Lieutenant General Raúl A. Poggi. and the Army Minister, Marino Carreras. As the Government's response seemed to drag on, they felt threatened and decided to act.

2

THE ARGENTINE ARMED FORCES IN THE EARLY 1960S

During the governments of General Aramburu and Frondizi, the Argentine Armed Forces reorganised themselves and renewed their war materiel, as will be seen below.

Air Force (Fuerza Aérea Argentina)

Between 1955 and 1966, the commanders of the Argentine Air Force were as in Table 1:



The two commanders of the Argentine Air Force in the events of 1962 and 1963. Left, Brigadier Generals Cayo Alsina. Right, Carlos Armanini (right). (Public domain)

Table 1: Commanders of the FAA (1955–1966)¹

Brigadier General Gustavo Hermansson	1955–1956
Brigadier General Heriberto Ahrens	1956–1957
Brigadier General Guillermo Zinny	1957
Brigadier General Ángel Peluffo	1957
Brigadier General Alfredo Vedoya	1957–1958
Brigadier Miguel Moragues	1958
Brigadier General Manuel Alemán	1958–1960
Brigadier General Cayo Alsina	1960–1962
Brigadier General Carlos Armanini	1962–1966

With regards to the organisation of the Argentine Air Force in the 1960s; the Air Force was led by a Commander-in-Chief. There were several organisations depending on the Air Force command: The Military Aeronautical Institutes Command, the General Defence Command, the Strategic Air Command, the Tactical Air Command and the Air Transport Command. The Air Force had its nucleus in the city of Córdoba where the Military Aircraft Factory (FMA), the Military Aviation School and the Specialised Non-Commissioned Officer School were located.



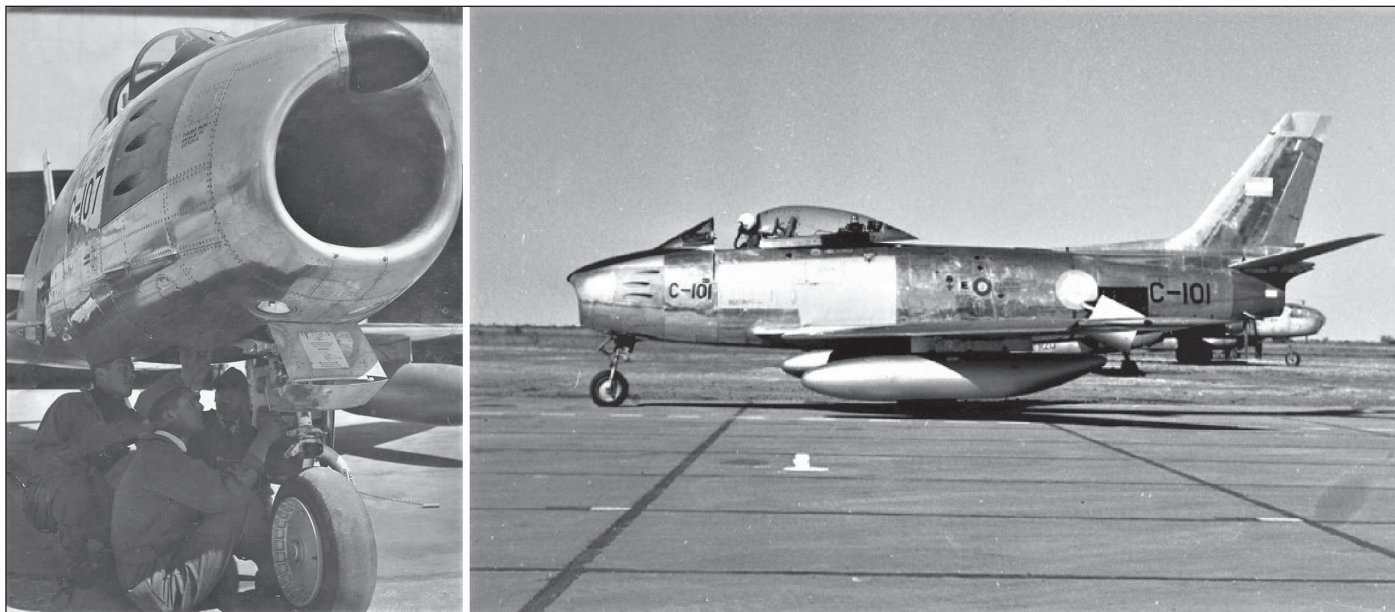
Argentine Air Force Morane-Saulnier M.S. 760 Paris advanced trainer/light attack aircraft acquired in 1958 (Alex Reinhard).



Left, North American F-86F-30 Sabre fighters were purchased in 1960. Right, the emblem of the Sabre fighters. (Vladimiro Cettolo collection).



Argentine Air Force B45 (T-34A) Mentro primary trainers purchased in 1957. (Dirección de Estudios Históricos de la Fuerza Aérea Argentina).



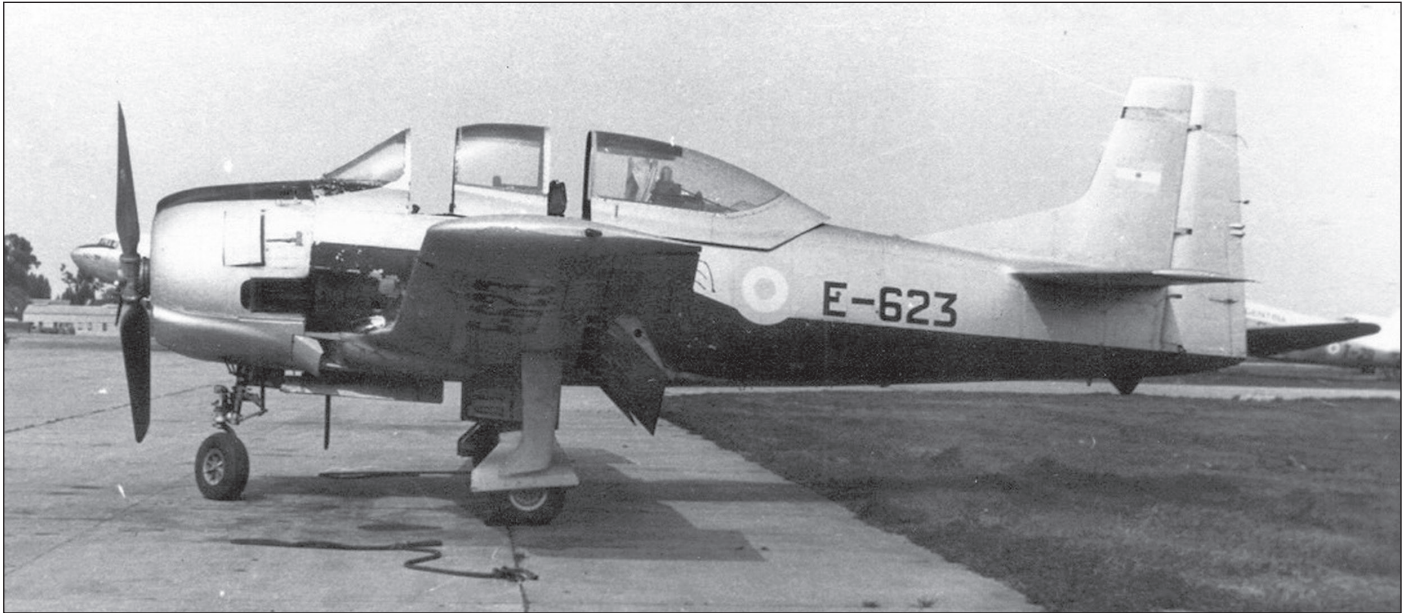
Left, three maintenance NCOs inspecting the nose gear of the F-86F, serial C-107, in the early 1960s. Right, F-86F serial C-101 taxiing. (Dirección de Estudios Históricos de la Fuerza Aérea Argentina)



Three N.A. F-86Fs can be seen during an aerial demonstration in 1962 at the Tandil Military Air Base, headquarters of the VI Air Brigade of the Argentine Air Force. (Dirección de Estudios Históricos de la Fuerza Aérea Argentina)

After the *Revolucion Libertadora* of 1955, the Argentine Air Force received an important batch of aircraft that increased its combat and training capacity. Thus, in 1957 the Beechcraft B45 (T-34A) Mentor for primary training was acquired and the following year the Morane-Saulnier M.S.760 Paris for advanced training and light attack was introduced. Twenty-eight North American F-86F Sabre fighter-bombers were added in 1960, followed by North American T-28A Trojan advanced trainers the following year.

On 9 January 1951, the organisation of the brigades had been restructured by Decree Nr.112/51-BAC Nr.45, with the assignment of technical groups to become operationally independent entities. The name of air regiments, air groups and military air bases had been changed to air groups, air squadrons and base groups. Its forces had been organised in seven Air Brigades shown in Table 2:



North American T-28A Trojan advanced trainers were introduced in 1961. (Dirección de Estudios Históricos de la Fuerza Aérea Argentina).

Table 2: Organisation of the Argentine Air Force²

Air Brigade	Location	Base	Groups	Aircraft
FIRST	El Palomar	BAM El Palomar	a) Transport Group Nr.1 b) Training Group Nr.1 c) Base Group Nr.1 d) Technical Group Nr.1	a) Vickers Viking, Beech AT-11, Douglas DC-3/C-47, De Havilland Dove, Bristol 170, b) N.A. T-28A Trojan
SECOND	Paraná	BAM General Urquiza	a) Observation Group Nr.1 b) Base Group Nr.2 c) Technical Group Nr.2	a) Beech AT-11, FMA IA-35 Huanquero
THIRD	Reconquista	BAM Reconquista	a) Attack Group Nr.2 b) Base Group Nr.3 c) Technical Group Nr.3	a) Beech AT-11.
FOURTH	Mendoza	BAM El Plumerillo	a) Fighter Group (CB-1) Nr.1 b) Attack Group Nr.1 c) Base Group Nr.4 d) Technical Group Nr.4	a) N.A. F-86F Sabre b) Morane-Saulnier MS-760 Paris.
FIFTH	Villa Reynolds	BAM Coronel Pringles	a) Bombardment Groups Nr.1 & Nr.2 b) Base Group Nr.5 c) Technical Group Nr.5	a) Avro Lincoln, Avro Lancaster
SIXTH	Tandil	BAM Tandil	a) Fighter Groups (CB-2/3) Nr.2 & Nr.3 b) SAR c) Base Group Nr.6 d) Technical Group Nr.6	a) Gloster Meteor F.Mk.4 b) Grumman UH16B Albatross
SEVENTH	Morón	BAM Morón	a) Transport Group Nr.2 b) Base Group Nr.7 c) Technical Group Nr.7	a) De Havilland Dove, Douglas DC-3/C-47, Douglas DC-4, Vickers Viking, Bristol 170
Military Aviation School	Córdoba	Córdoba	Training Air Groups	Beechcraft B45 Mentor, North American T-28A Trojan, Morane-Saulnier M.S.760 Paris

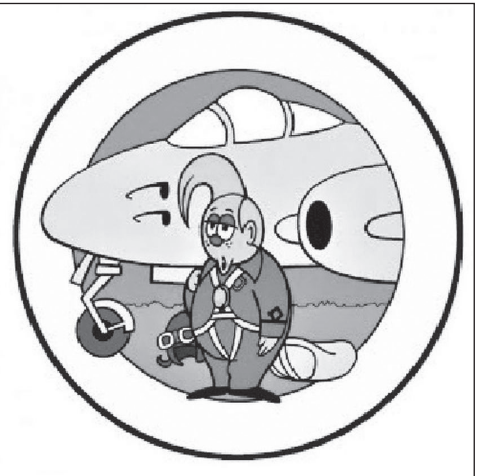
BAM (Base Aérea Militar = Military Air Base).



Three Grumman UH-16B Albatross. The Albatross saw service in the Argentine Air Force in SAR and utility transport duties from 1962 to 1977. (Dirección de Estudios Históricos de la Fuerza Aérea Argentina)



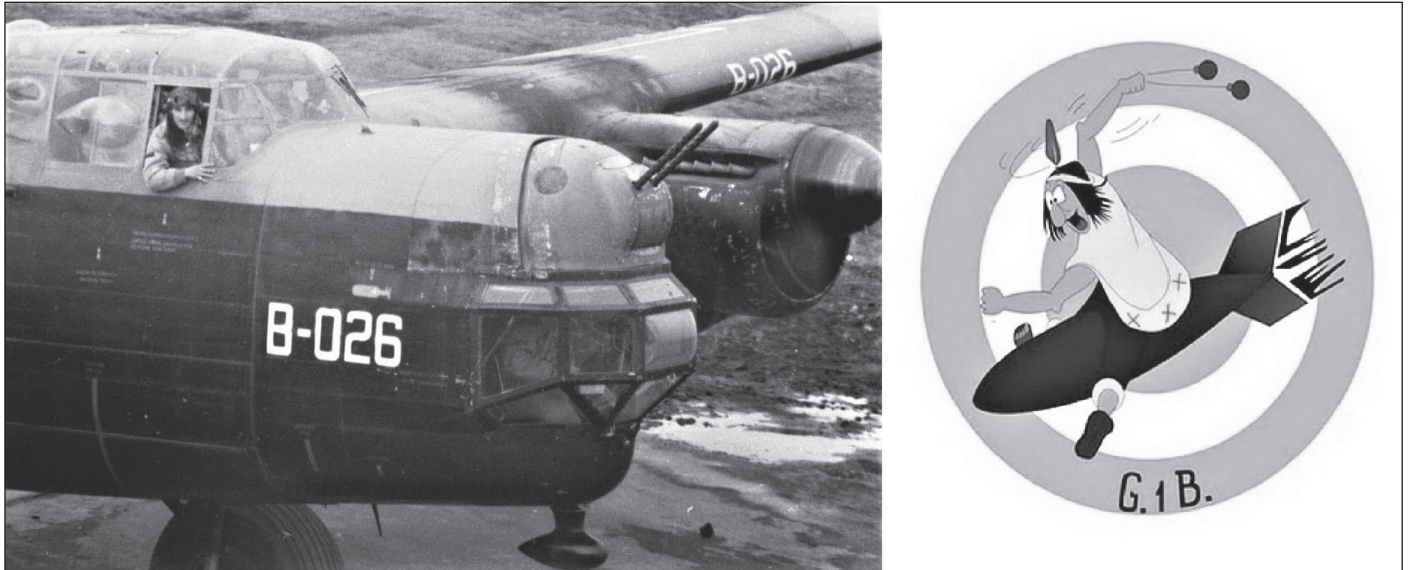
Seven Sikorsky S-55 were purchased in 1954 and used as utility helicopters by the Air Force. (Dirección de Estudios Históricos de la Fuerza Aérea Argentina)



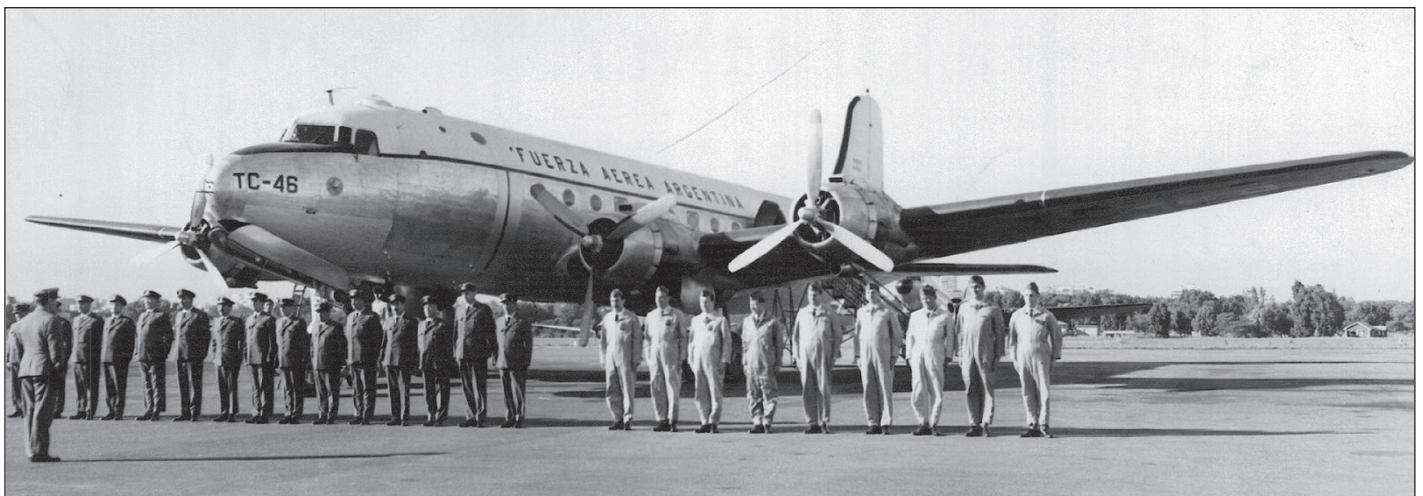
Left, Gloster Meteor F.Mk.IV interceptor fighters of the VI Air Brigade in Tandil towards the end of the 1950s. Right, the 'Bólide' emblem of the Meteors, a very popular cartoon in Argentina at the end of the 1940s. (Dirección de Estudios Históricos de la Fuerza Aérea Argentina)

By the early 1960s, the Argentine Air Force had the aircraft types shown in Table 3 on strength:

Table 3: Argentine Air Force aircraft types³		
Type/Years in service	Number of Aircraft*	Role
Gloster G.41 F.Mk.4 Meteor (1947–1970)	100	Jet fighter/Interceptor
North American F-86F-30 Sabre (1960–1986)	28	Jet fighter-bomber
Avro 694 B.Mk.II Lincoln (1947–1967)	30	Heavy bomber
Avro 683 Mk.I Lancaster (1947–1966)	15	Heavy bomber
Beechcraft AT-11 Kansan (1948–1963)	30	Bomber-navigation trainer
Piper PA-18-150 Super Cub (1955–1973)	7	Primary trainer
Beechcraft B45 (T-34A) Mentor (1957–2011)	90	Primary trainer
Percival P.40 Prentice T.Mk.I (1948–1962)	100	Trainer
North American T-28A Trojan (1961–1966)	52	Advanced trainer
Morane-Saulnier MS-760 Paris (1958–2006)	48	Advanced trainer/light attack
Grumman UH-16B Albatross (1962–1977)	3	SAR/utility transport
FMA IA-35 Huanquero (1953–1974)	47	Multipurpose
FMA IA-35 II Constancia (1958–1963)	3	Light transport
De Havilland DH-104 Dove (1947–1968)	70	Light transport
Beechcraft D18C (1948–1967)	1	Light transport
FMA IA-45 Querandí (1957–1965)	2	Light transport/ambulance
Cessna 170B (1958–1980)	1	Light transport
Beechcraft B35 Bonanza (1958–1968)	3	Light transport
Douglas DC-3/C-47 (1943–1990)	50	Transport
Douglas DC-4/C-54 (1946–1969)	10	Transport
Bristol 170 Mk.IA Freighter (1946–1967)	15	Cargo/passenger transport
Vickers T.Mk.1/Mk1B Viking (1946–1963)	24	Cargo/passenger transport
Piper J-3 Cub / PA-12 (1946–1980)	5	Liaison
FMA IA-46 Ranquel (1957–Present)	18	Liaison/Tug plane
FMA IA-51 Tehuelche (1963–1981)	1	Tug plane
Fairchild 82D (1937–1963)	2	Aerial Photography
Sikorsky S-51 (1947–1967)	15	Utility helicopter
Sikorsky S-55 (1954–1968)	7	Utility helicopter
*The number of aircraft in the table corresponds to the total of this type in service in the Air Force throughout its history.		



Left, the Avro 694 B.Mk.II Lincoln bombers continued in service as a strategic force in the Argentine Air Force during the 1960s. Right, the 'Patoruzú' (an aborigine on a bomb) emblem of the Bombardment Group Nr.1. (Dr Atilio Marino)



An Air Transport Command Douglas DC-4. (Dirección de Estudios Históricos de la Fuerza Aérea Argentina)



The FMA IA-35 Huanquero was a twin-engine multipurpose aircraft built in Argentina and used by the Air Force between 1953 and 1974. (Dirección de Estudios Históricos de la Fuerza Aérea Argentina)

Navy (Armada de la República Argentina)

After the 1955 coup d'état, the Argentine Navy was well positioned both militarily and politically, so that it was assigned a larger budget for the acquisition of the first aircraft carrier, in addition to one frigate, two destroyers, two submarines, two transport ships, two tugs, a rescue ship and a floating dock.

The Argentine Navy had its main base in Puerto Belgrano, near Bahía Blanca, a smaller base in Río Santiago, which was the garrison of the Naval School and the Naval Lyceum. In the Federal Capital there were the Navy Mechanics School and the Navy Arsenal. Admiral Carlos Rivero de Olazábal was the commander of the Argentine Navy in 1955.

Between 1958 and 1968, the Naval officers shown in Table 4 were in charge of the Navy:

In the early 1960s, the Argentine Navy had the following ships in active service: one aircraft carrier, five heavy cruisers, one corvette, six frigates, nine minesweepers, thirteen destroyers/torpedo boats, two patrol boats, nine PT boats, three submarines, one beacon boat, eight transport boats, four hydrographic boats, one oceanographic boat, two LCMs, twenty-six LSTs, five ocean tugs, seven tugs, two rescue ships, a presidential yacht, two workshop vessels, five gasoline tankers and a floating dock (see Appendix).

Table 4: Commanders of the Argentine Navy 1958–1968⁴

Vice Admiral Adolfo B. Estévez	1958–1959	Commander of Naval Operations
Admiral Alberto P. Vago	1959–1961	Commander of Naval Operations
Admiral Agustín Penas	1961–1962	Commander of Naval Operations
Vice Admiral Leandro Maloberti	1962	Commander of Naval Operations
Vice Admiral Enrique Grünwaldt	1962–1963	Commander of Naval Operations
Rear Admiral Eladio Vázquez	1963	Commander of Naval Operations
Admiral Benigno Varela	1963–1968	Commander-in-Chief of the Navy



Several Admirals were Commanders of Naval Operations during the 1962–1963 Armed Forces crisis. From left to right: Admiral Agustín Penas, Vice Admiral Leandro Maloberti, Vice Admiral Enrique Grünwaldt, Rear Admiral Eladio Vázquez and Admiral Benigno Varela. (Public Domain)



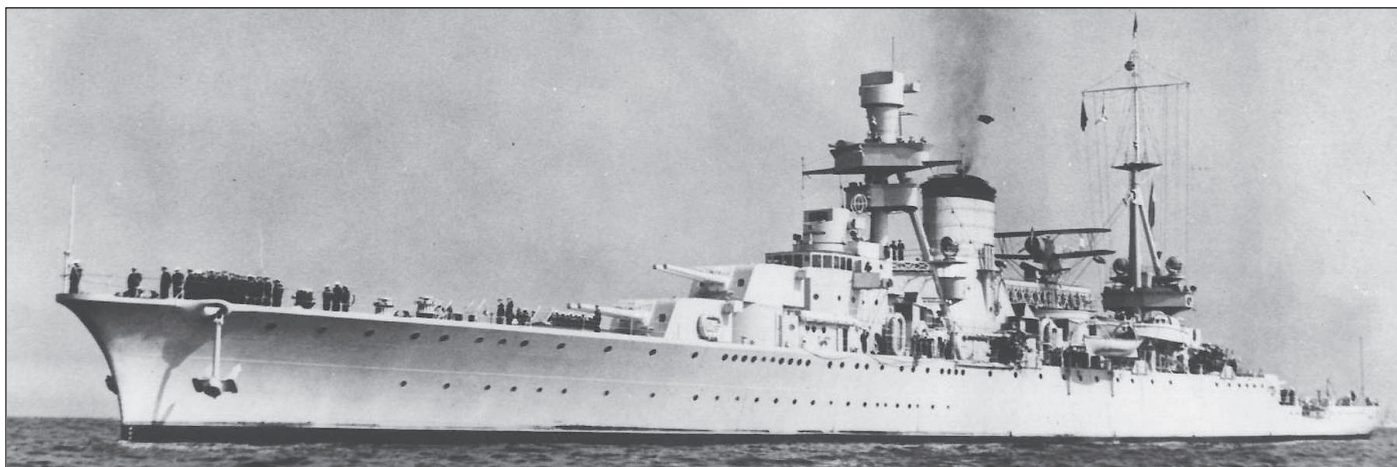
The Argentine Navy's first aircraft carrier, the ARA *Independencia* (V-1) ex HMCS *Warrior* (CVL 20) of the Royal Canadian Navy and ex HMS *Warrior* (R31) of the Royal Navy. Six Grumman S2A Trackers and three Vought F4U-5 Corsairs can be seen on deck. (Esteban Racyznski Collection)



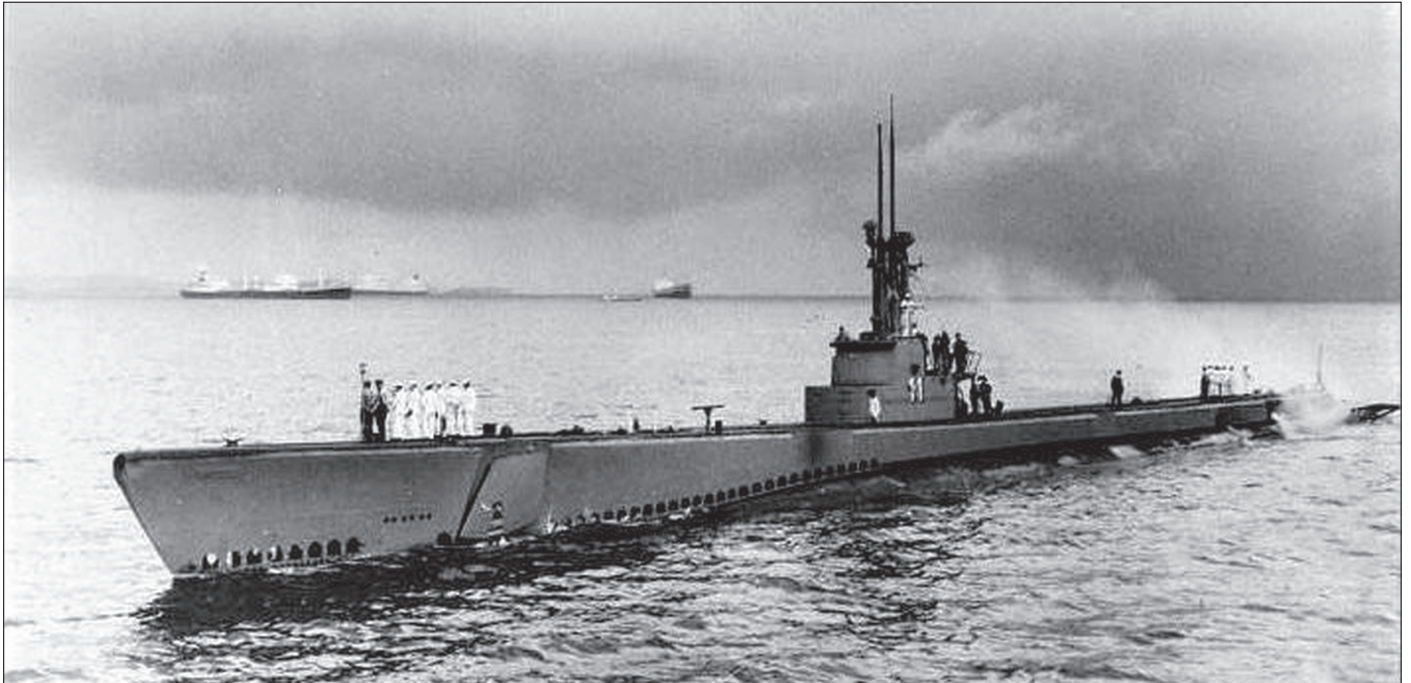
The ARA *Independencia* deck crew posing next to a Grumman S2A Tracker in 1964. (Rufino Machi)



The heavy cruiser ARA *Nueve de Julio* (C-5) in the early 1960s. (Argentine Navy)



The heavy cruiser ARA *Veinticinco de Mayo* (C-2) in the early 1960s. (Argentine Navy)



The submarine S-11 ARA *Santa Fé* (Balao Class, ex SS-375 USS Macabi) in August 1960. (Public Domain)



The Argentine Naval Aviation Vought F4U-5 fighters acquired in 1956, which had a very active role in the 1963 clashes between the Colorados and Azules. (Aviación Naval Argentina)



Naval Aviation F4U-5 fighters on the ARA *Independencia* aircraft carrier's deck. The two colour schemes used by these aircraft are shown, the dark blue on the left and the light grey/white on the right. (Aviación Naval Argentina)



An impressive line-up of Grumman F9F-2 Panther fighters of the Argentine Naval Aviation at Punta Indio base. (Aviación Naval Argentina)



Two Grumman F9F-8T Cougar fighters were acquired as advanced trainers for the Panther jets in 1962. (Aviación Naval Argentina)



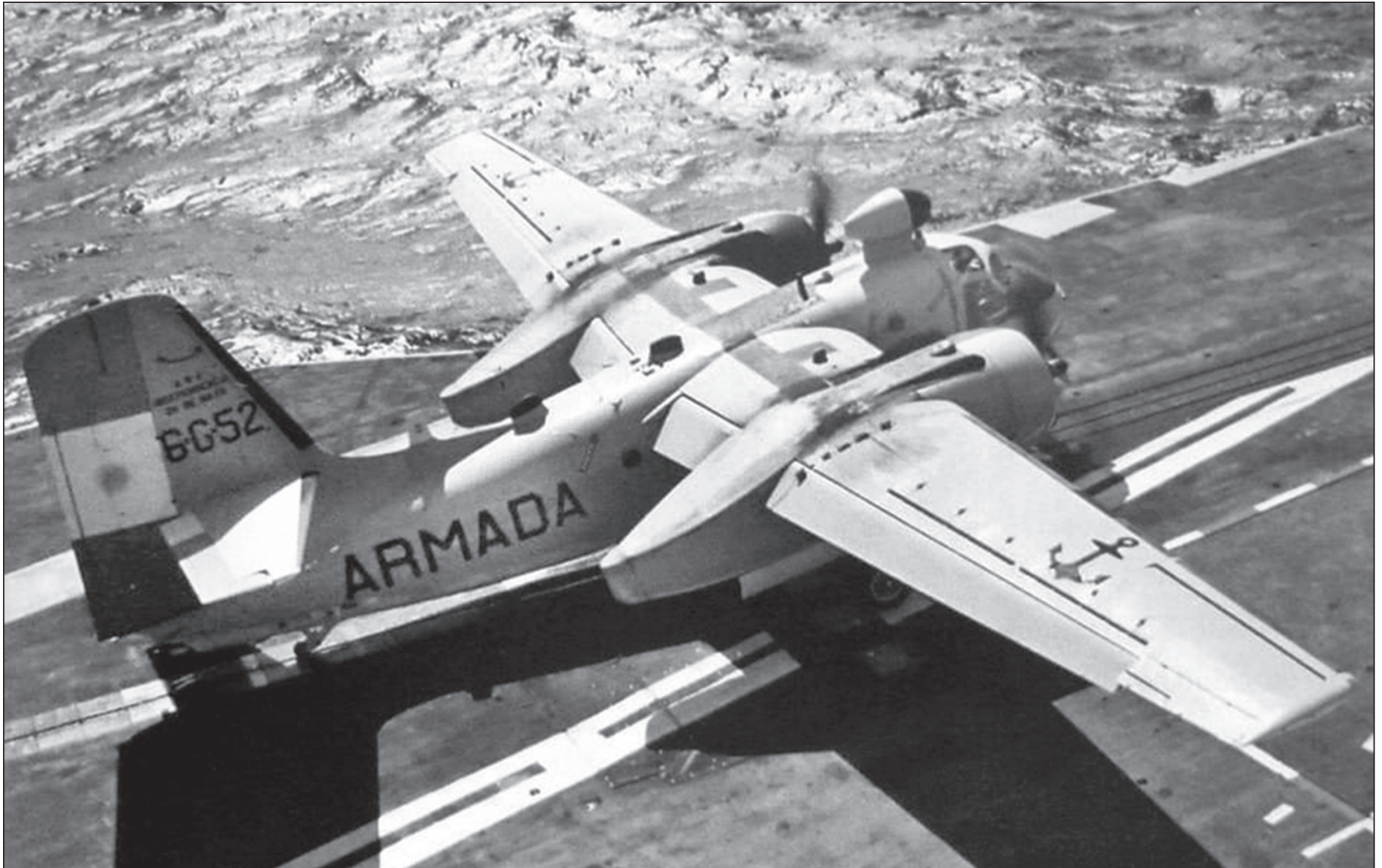
Also for service as Maritime Patrol/ASW aircraft, eight Lockheed P-2V5 Neptune had been bought in 1958. Right, the emblem of the Naval Aviation painted on the rear fuselage. (Esteban Raczyński collection)

The Naval Aviation service also benefited greatly from the events of 1955, since it received Vought F4U-5 Corsair fighters, which were able to operate from the V-1 ARA *Independencia* aircraft carrier. Additionally, the Naval Aviation service received its first fighter jets, the Grumman F9F-2 Panther, but they did not see service on board the *Independencia* because of certain limitations of that

aircraft carrier. ASW planes were also acquired, as can be seen in the chart below.

By the early 1960s, the types of aircraft shown in Table 5 were on strength:

On the other hand, the Argentine Marine Infantry was structured in companies of 150 men, with each section (platoon) of 36 troops.



In 1962 seven Grumman S2A Trackers were purchased as Maritime Patrol/ASW aircraft and they served both on the ARA *Independencia* aircraft carrier and on land. (Esteban Raczynski collection)

Table 5: Argentine Naval Aviation aircraft types⁵

Type/Years in service	Number of aircraft*	Role
Boeing/Stearman PT-17 Kaydet (1947–1962)	60	Primary trainer
Luscombe 8E Silvaire (1948–1965)	3	Primary trainer
Vultee BT-13/SNV-1 Valiant (1947–1963)	29	Basic trainer
North American SNJ-3/4/5C/AT-6A/B/C Texan (1947–1970)	124	Advanced trainer
Chance-Vought F4U-5/N/NL Corsair (1956–1965)	26	Fighter/attack
Grumman F9F-2 Panther (1957–1969)	24	Fighter/attack
Grumman F9F-8T Cougar (1962–1968)	2	Advanced trainer/attack/fighter
Lockheed P-2V5 Neptune (1958–1971)	8	Maritime Patrol/ASW
Grumman S2A Tracker (1962–1979)	7	Maritime Patrol/ASW
Canadian Vickers PBV-1A Canso A (1946–1970) Boeing Canada PB2B-1 Canso Consolidated Model 28-5AMC Catalina IIA	17	Maritime Patrol bomber/SAR
Martín PBM-5S Mariner (1954–1964)	8	Maritime Patrol bomber
Beechcraft AT-11 Kansan (1948–1966)	13	Bomber trainer/Light bomber
Grumman HU-16B Albatross (1960–1977)	4	SAR/ASW
Beechcraft D18S (1948–1965)	1	Light transport
Beechcraft C-45H Expeditor (1961–1978)	1	Multipurpose light transport
De Havilland DHC-2 Beaver (1956–1968)	2	Multipurpose light transport
Douglas C-47 Skytrain (1946–1979)	15	Transport
Douglas C-54/DC-4 Skymaster (1947–1976)	7	Transport

*The number of aircraft in the table corresponds to the total of this type in service in the Naval Aviation throughout its history.



A Naval Aviation Douglas DC-4. Seven DC-4s were in service between 1947 and 1976 and one was destroyed in this conflict. (Archivo General de la Nación)

The battalion was made up of three Marine Infantry companies and other logistics, support and services troops, thus adding between 800 and 900 effectives.

Army (Ejército Argentino)

Between 1955 and 1965, the Commanders of the Argentine Army were as shown in Table 6:

Table 6: Commanders of the Argentine Army 1955–1965 ⁶	
Lieutenant General Julio Lagos	1955–1956
Lieutenant General Francisco José Zerda	1956
Lieutenant General Luis Carlos Raimundo Busetti	1956–1957
Lieutenant General Arturo Ossorio Arana	1957–1958
Lieutenant General Héctor Solanas Pacheco	1958–1959
Lieutenant General Carlos Toranzo Montero	1959–1961
Lieutenant General Raúl Poggi	1961–1962
Brigadier General Juan Bautista Loza	1962
Brigadier General Juan Carlos Lorio	1962
Lieutenant General Juan Carlos Onganía	1962–1965

Within the campaign to give a new image to the Argentine Army after the overthrow of General Perón in 1955, the uniforms were modified and Americanised, substituting the steel helmets



Some Army troops still using the Swiss helmets in the early 1960s. (Ejército Argentino)

of German and Swiss origin, first for a French M51 helmet of NATO pattern, which was used only until 1956, then to finally adopt the American M1 helmet. The replacement of helmets was done progressively throughout the Army and some units still used the Swiss helmets until the end of the 1960s. Army units used the M1 Garand rifle, the Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR), and FN-FAL rifles.



Four Generals were in charge of the Army during the crisis in 1962–63. From left to right: Lieutenant General Raúl Poggi, Brigadier General Juan B. Loza, Brigadier General Juan Carlos Lorio and Lieutenant General Juan Carlos Onganía. (Public Domain)



President Arturo Frondizi reviews the men at the Army War School on 2 October 1961. The troops are already using the American M1 helmets. (Archivo General de la Nación)



Left, Army troops wearing a winter uniform and a cap in 1962. Right, troops with a more American like uniform wearing M-1 helmets in 1963. In both pictures, they are carrying FN-FAL 1 rifles. (1982 Militaria Forum)



The Argentine-built Submachine Gun PAM 1, based on the American M3A1 'Grease Gun'. (Ejército Argentino)

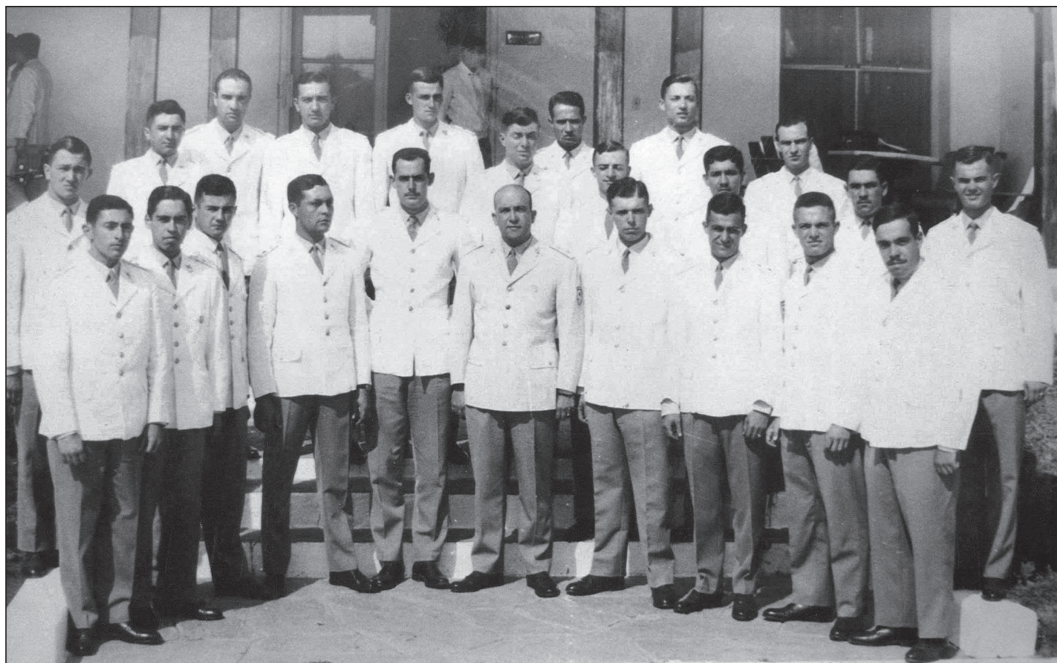
In the mid-1950s, Argentina acquired the rights to manufacture a submachine gun similar to the American M3A1, popularly known as the 'Grease Gun'. The task was entrusted to the Domingo Matheu

Military Portable Weapons Factory, dependent on the General Directorate of Military Manufacturing, which set to work on an indigenous model that fired 9 x 19mm Parabellum projectiles. Thus, the PAM 1 (Machine Gun 1) and PAM 2 (Machine Gun 2) versions were born, both 9mm calibre, with and without safety grip. Version 1 began to be mass-produced in 1959 and featured an automatic firing system with a telescopic steel-wire stock, which fired from an open bolt and had a rate of fire of 450 rounds per minute. Its effective range was about 150m and it had a detachable 30-round magazine. In 1963, a variant called the PAM 2 began to be manufactured, which had a key, or firing selector, lever and a grip safety located in the receiver box of the magazine. The PAM 1 was used during the conflict between Azules and Colorados, both by military and police cadres, while version 2 was used during the anti-subversive war that devastated the country in the 1970s and during the conflict with Great Britain in the South Atlantic in 1982.

The Argentine Army unit termed a Regiment had an organisation of three companies of infantry, a commando company and a support services company, to which was added a group of heavy weapons or artillery, to a total of 700 men. Each company was made up of 150



An Argentine Army Sherman IVC Firefly tank.
(Ejército Argentino)



The first commando course held in Córdoba in 1964, with Lieutenant
Colonel Leandro Narvaja Luque at centre, front row.
(Ejército Argentino)

men organised as follows: 4 infantry sections (platoons) and one heavy weapons section. Each infantry section consisted of 30 to 35 soldiers. The Brigade was the largest unit and in the Argentine Army it had 2,200 to 2,500 men organised into three infantry regiments, two infantry regiments and one cavalry regiment, or three cavalry regiments (in the Armoured Brigades). To the regiments was added an artillery group (field or anti-aircraft), a logistics battalion and another for support services.

The units of the Argentine Army were, at that time, strategically distributed around a territory of almost three million square kilometres. It had a central grouping in the city of Córdoba, another on the western border (Mendoza, Catamarca, San Juan and La Rioja), another garrisoning the northern border (Salta and Jujuy), another covered the northwest border (Entre Ríos, Santa Fé and Corrientes, with forces in the Chaco and Formosa), while several detachments were based in Patagonia (Neuquén, Río Negro, Chubut and Santa Cruz). The Federal Capital was garrisoned by an Army division and the province of Buenos Aires by a Cavalry division.

In 1960, during the Frondizi Government, the CONINTES plan (Internal Commotion of the State) was created. For the implementation of the plan, Argentina was divided into defence zones, whose highest authorities were military and the provincial police was subordinated to the military command.

In 1963 the Argentine Army added the speciality of commando units to its order of battle. The following year, Lieutenant Colonel

Leandro Narvaja Luque taught the first course, with the advice of the American Major, William Cole, a veteran of the Korean War.

Between 1946 and 1947, Argentina acquired a supply of 400 armoured vehicles from Great Britain, of which 194 were original Sherman M4 tanks, with their 75mm guns, and the remaining 206, the British Firefly variant. Payment was made at a ridiculous price for the debt that Great Britain had to Argentina and with that transaction, the Perón Government deactivated the Nahuel DL-43 tank programme, a national tank designed by Lieutenant Colonel Alfredo A. Baisi and Major Francisco Armando Villamil in 1944 and built in the Esteban de Luca Arsenal. The Shermans made it possible to reinforce the armoured cavalry units, especially the Buenos Aires Motorised Regiment, and the Cazadores General Necochea C-8 Tank Cavalry Regiment from Magdalena. In the early 1960s, the M4s were fitted with domestically built 105mm FTM guns (built under licence from France), smoke launchers, 520hp Poyaud diesel engines, communications equipment and improved fire direction. By then, of the initial 400 armoured vehicles, 266 remained in service, of which 152 were of the Firefly variant. In 1962 only 152 tanks remained in service, and these were uparmoured with additional armour plates, two welded to the right side, one to the left side and two on the front, to protect the driver and the machine gunner.

The Argentine Army received and fielded the armoured vehicles shown in Table 7:

Armoured Vehicle	Number of Vehicles*	Year of Acquisition
Universal Carrier T-16	250	1948
Sherman IVC/VC Firefly tank w/QF 17pdr 76.2mm gun	206	1946
Sherman M4A tank w/76mm cannon OQF (Ordnance Quick Firing)	154	1948
M7 Priest with a 105mm howitzer	6	1950
British Crusader tank w/105mm Schneider or 75mm Bofors/Krupp gun	32	1949
M3/M5/M9 Half-track	320	Late 1940s
*The number of armoured vehicles in the table corresponds to the total of this type in service in the Army throughout its history.		



A Sherman M4A of the Magdalena C-8 Tank Regiment. The soldiers are wearing the Argentine-manufactured tanker helmet based on the American doughnut model. (Ejército Argentino)

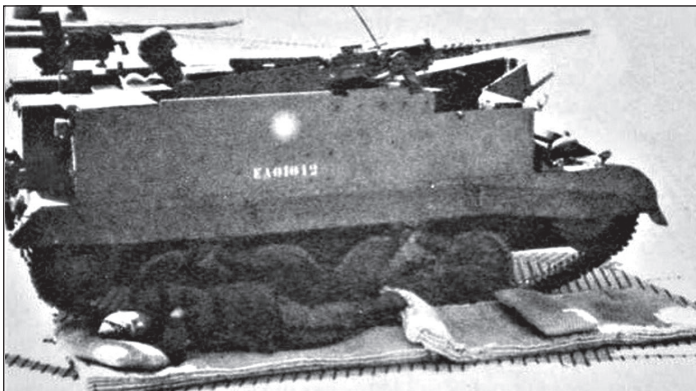
Also, in the late 1940s, 2,500 Mk.19 radio sets were acquired for the army.

In 1951 there were three Armoured Groups, A, B and C. Each Armoured Group was organised as follows:

- A Group Command company (with Crusader tanks and T-16 carriers).
- One battalion of armoured riflemen, with three companies (with M3 half-tracks).
- A tank battalion, with three Sherman companies (one of them was a Tank Destroyer Company, equipped with Sherman Fireflies).

In 1958 the organisation of the armoured regiments was modified again, and were renamed Armoured Cavalry Regiments, these had 5 squadrons:

- First Squadron (with Sherman tanks), with three sections.
- Second Squadron (with Sherman tanks), also with three sections.
- Third Squadron (with Sherman tanks), with three sections.
- Fourth Squadron of Armoured Riflemen (with M3/5/9 Half-Track vehicles).
- Fifth Squadron of support services.



Argentine Army Universal Carrier T-16. Left, a soldier is resting on a mattress by the Carrier. Right, two soldiers can be seen still wearing the Swiss helmet on a Carrier during some manoeuvres in the early 1960s. (Ejército Argentino)



Some Argentine Army Crusaders during a military parade in Buenos Aires in the 1950s. (Ricardo Signal Fogliani)



Argentine Army M7 Priests with a 105mm howitzer M2A-1 during a military parade in the 1950s. (Ricardo Signal Fogliani)



Left, two M5 Half-Tracks mounting 75mm Krupp guns. Right, some Army NCOs posing on a M9 Half-Track. (Ejército Argentino)

In 1960, the Army had in service 136 Sherman tanks with 76.2mm gun and 64 with the 75mm gun, 213 half-tracks, 42 T16 carriers and 6 M7 Priests.

Between 1961 and 1962, the Argentine Army received a total of 2,617 vehicles, among which were the 2.5 and 5-ton Reo trucks, Dodge M37B1 trucks, and M38A1 Jeeps.



Some happy Argentine Army conscripts posing on a M38A1 Jeep. (Ejército Argentino)

With the official creation of the Argentine Air Force (FAA) on 4 January 1945, all the aircraft of the army were transferred to the new Air Force. But the Argentine Army did not resign itself to being completely without aircraft, so in December 1954, it acquired its first three Douglas C-47s as support aircraft and for administrative tasks, and later also to train the airborne troops and paratroopers. They were stationed at the Aircraft Factory in Córdoba. It was only on 10 June 1956 that the Army Aviation was reborn officially. Its first operative unit was the Army Aviation Division, formed on 17 November 1959. The following year the Army Aviation Group Nr.1 was founded whose operative unit was Army Aviation Battalion 601 and its fleet was increased with the addition of the aircraft in Table 8:

Argentina acquired its first anti-aircraft guns in 1938, with the first 6 Bofors 40/60 guns arriving from Sweden before 1941, prior to the German invasion of Denmark and Norway. The remaining 54

did not arrive until after the end of World War II. They served in different conflicts, the first of them in the *Revolucion Libertadora* in 1955 and then in the Azules versus Colorados in 1962–63 and the Falklands War in 1982.

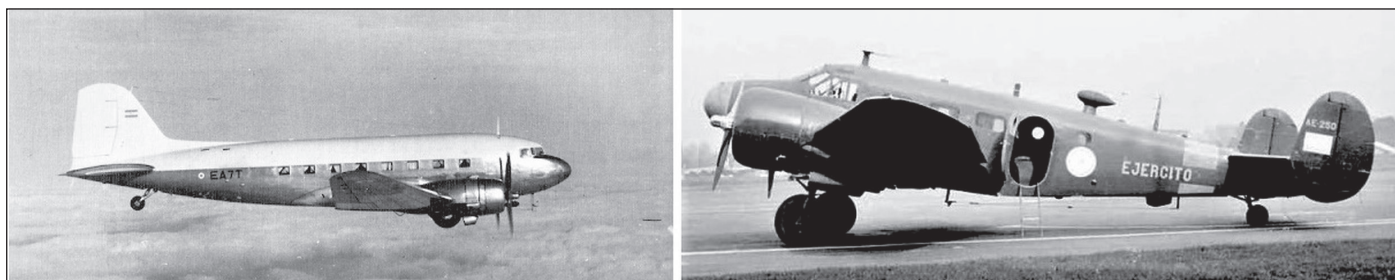
Table 8: Argentine Army Aviation aircraft types⁸

Type	Year of acquisition	Number of aircraft	Role
Douglas C-47A/B	1954	3*	Troop transport
Beechcraft D18C	1956	2	Geographic Military Institute
Piper PA-23-150 Apache D	1957	5	Light transport
Cessna 180	1957	2	Liaison
Piper L-21B Super Cub	1957	11	Trainer/liaison
Piper PA-11 Cub Special	1957	1	Liaison
Piper J-3 Cub	1949	1	Liaison
Cessna 310P	1958	1	Light transport/liaison
FMA I.A.20 El Boyero	1958	5	Trainer/liaison
Beechcraft UC-45G/H	1959	3	Light transport
Douglas C-47 B/ DC-3/R4D-1/C-53	1960	12 (*)	Troop transport

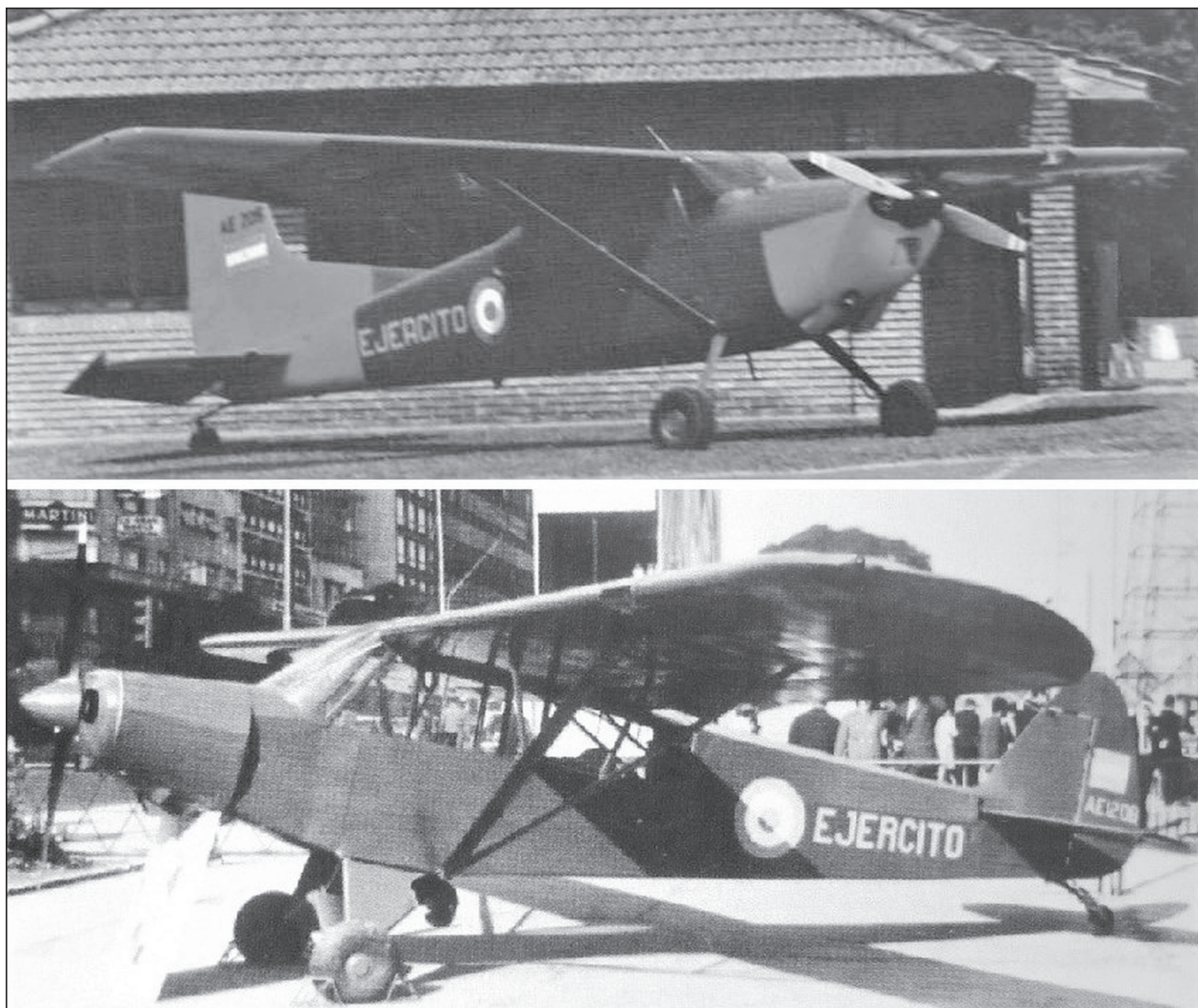
* They were all transferred to the Air Force in the 1960s.



Soldiers of the Engineering School of Campo de Mayo of the Army in 1958. They are all wearing the American M-1 helmet.(Ejército Argentino)



Left, one of the Argentine Army Aviation's Douglas C-47. Right, an Army Aviation Beechcraft UC-45G. (Esteban Raczyński collection)



Top, an Army Cessna 180. Bottom, a Piper L-21B Super Cub. (Ejército Argentino)



Argentine Army AA Bofors guns being pulled by trucks in the late 1950s. (Ejército Argentino)

3

MILITARY UPRISING FIRST ACT (SEPTEMBER 1962)

The Holy Week Crisis

There had already been tense situations in 1959, 1960 and 1961, and again the same at the beginning of 1962, more precisely on 20 April, when Major General Enrique Rauch, then commander of the Campo de Mayo garrison, rose in revolt, demanding resignations.

On Friday, 20 April 1962, during the Easter holiday, when Guido had not yet served a month in the Presidency, and after the coup against Frondizi, the first clash between the two military factions took place. The commander of the Army Cavalry based in Campo de Mayo, General Enrique Rauch, an Azul who would later assume positions close to the Colorados and would be described as a 'Violet' (see below), publicly requested the resignation of the Secretary of War, General Marino Carreras, with the reserved intention of replacing the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, General Raúl Poggi, leader of the military group that had overthrown Frondizi. General Poggi had commanded the coup against Frondizi, but he also reflected the internal changes of power in the Army, since he belonged to the Army Engineering Corps, a division

of the army that had never before reached the position of command of the Army.

Rauch expressed the position of a group of Army officers who sought to reduce military pressure on Guido, so that he could hold presidential elections quickly and set up his command post in the Superior War College, supported by his director, Colonel Alejandro Agustín Lanusse. Rauch made the request after meeting with President Guido and in the belief that Guido had supported him.

Guido, subjected to strong pressure, after relieving General Carrera, offered the position of Secretary of War to Rauch who, moments after accepting the position, learned that Poggi had

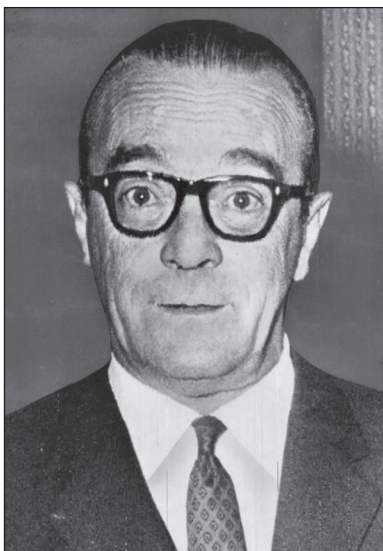


Left, Major General Enrique Rauch, Commander of the Campo de Mayo garrison. Right, the then Colonel Alejandro Agustín Lanusse, director of the Army War School. (Public Domain)

decided to hold on tightly to the post of Army Commander-in-Chief and to resist his removal, and immediately ordered Colonel Tomás Sánchez de Bustamante to mobilise his armoured units and set out for the Federal Capital.

At 5 a.m. on Saturday, 21 April Rauch gave the order to mobilise armour and infantry from Campo de Mayo and Magdalena and to take up positions in the city of Buenos Aires to confront Poggi's troops. The column of tanks was advancing towards Plaza de Mayo when Guido's intervention stopped the confrontation. Negotiations between the two sides continued throughout the day, with the continued intervention of President Guido. On 22nd, Rauch, Poggi and Carreras agreed to retire and their positions were filled by their peers, Generals Benjamín Rattenbach, Juan Carlos Lorio and Juan Bautista Loza, the latter being a supporter of the Azul sector who as well as having some respect among the Colorados also avoided

appointing a Commander-in-Chief of the Army, keeping the functions in his own hands, while General Onganía became the new commander of the Campo de Mayo garrison.



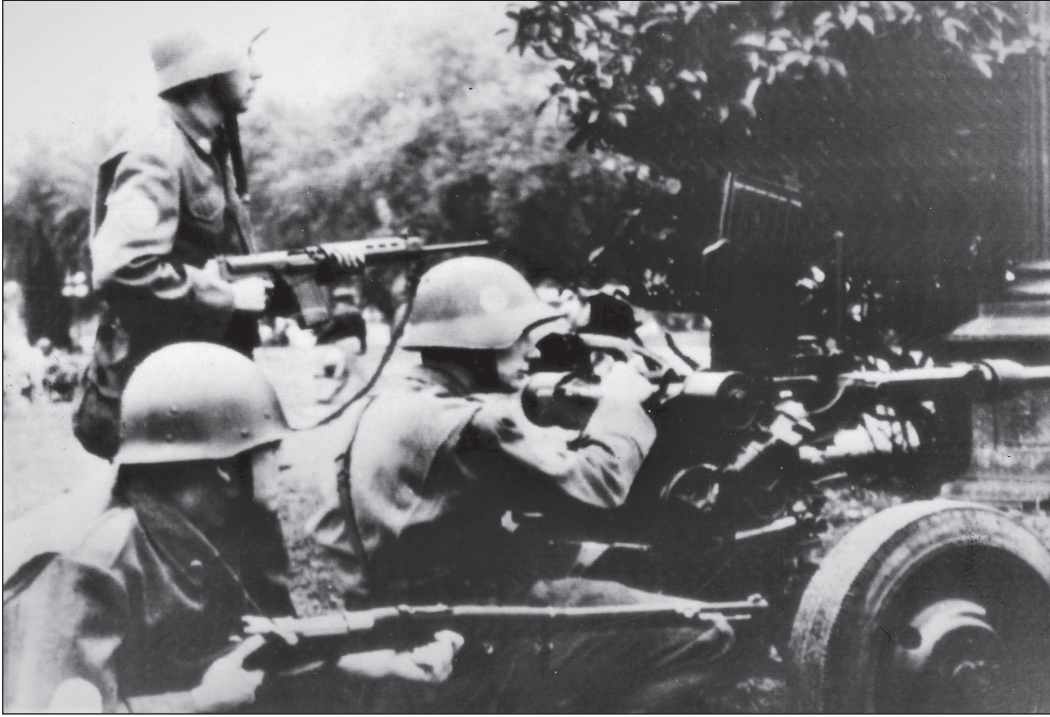
The first military crisis took President José María Guido by surprise in his first month in post. (Public Domain)



Lt. Gen. Raúl Poggi (right), Commander of the Army, together with Admiral Agustín Penas (centre), Chief of Naval Operations, and Brigadier General Cayo Alsina (left), Commander of the Air Force, during the Holy Week Crisis in April 1962. (Archivo General de la Nación)



A column of Sherman tanks under the command of General Rauch heading from Campo de Mayo to the Federal Capital to confront General Poggi's troops on 21 April 1962. (AP Photo)



Troops guarding the surroundings of the Ministry of War building during the Holy Week crisis in April 1962. Two soldiers still wear the Swiss helmet and a third the American M1. (UPI Radiophoto)



General Juan Carlos Onganía, who would be a key element during the events of 1962 and 1963, was appointed Commander of the Campo de Mayo Garrison. (Public domain)

That same day, Federico Pinedo, Minister of Economy, and Foreign Minister Mariano José Drago resigned from their positions, and were replaced by Álvaro Alsogaray and Bonifacio del Carril, respectively. It seemed like a Colorado victory, the majority at the top of the Army, especially after Guido appointed General Bernardino Labayru as Chief of the General Staff.

The Toranzo Montero Uprising of August 1962

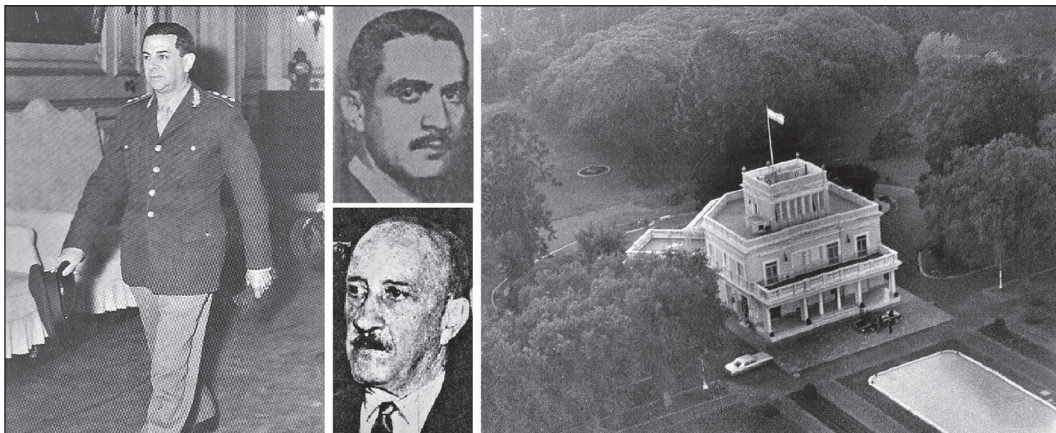
On 8 August 1962, General Federico Toranzo Montero, commander of IV Army Corps based in Salta and a supporter of the more extreme side (Colorado), opposed to any integration of Peronism (anti-integrationists), demanded the resignation of the Secretary of War, General Loza. Loza resigned and President Guido entrusted the Defence Minister José Luis Cantilo as the new Secretary of War. Cantilo, in an unprecedented event, met separately with each of the generals and asked them to vote to elect the new Secretary. The chosen individual was (retired) General Eduardo Señorans, an officer of the Corps of Engineers, who met with Guido to explain his plans to resolve the crisis. Moments later, Toranzo Montero refused to recognise Señorans as Secretary, requesting the replacement of the new Secretary by Arturo Ossorio Arana, a man of outstanding performance in the *Revolucion Libertadora* and, in another unprecedented act, Montero issued a document in which he named himself as 'Commander-in-Chief of the Army in operations', setting up his command in the Motorised Division Nr.1 of Palermo, in the heart of the city of Buenos Aires. He ordered his supporters to prevent Señorans from being installed as the Secretary of War and deployed troops in La Matanza, forcing Señorans to establish his offices in the Escuela Superior de Guerra (the Army War School).

Given this situation, 8 of the 10 Sherman tanks of the Horse Grenadier Regiment of the Presidential Guard

(the Regiment had been in charge of presidential security since Argentine independence), and from Magdalena, headquarters of C-8 Armoured Cavalry Regiment, 30 Shermans commanded by Colonel Alcides López Aufranc were sent to La Plata, base of the Infantry Regiment Nr.7, which supported the rebels. On the other hand, a rebel column commanded by General Juan Carlos Onganía departed from Campo de Mayo, with 300 vehicles, half of them armoured, and 10,000 men belonging to the Cavalry Training Centre,



Immediately after the crisis of April 1962 was solved, two ministers of the Executive Power were replaced. The new ministers were Álvaro Alsogaray (Economy) (left) and Bonifacio del Carril (Foreign Relations) (right). (Public domain)



Left, General Federico Toranzo Montero, Commander of IV Army Corps in Salta. Centre (upper), the Minister of Defence José Luis Cantilo and (lower) General (retired) Eduardo Señorans. (Public domain). Right, the Quinta de Olivos presidential residence. (Diario La Nación)

the Armoured Sappers Battalion, the C-15 Tank Regiment and the Armoured Cavalry Regiments Nr.10 and Nr.2. Almost at midnight, they stopped at the intersection of Route 8 and Marquez Avenue.

On the afternoon of 10 August, Señorans took office and considered that Toranzo Montero had committed an act of rebellion, which should be repressed if he would not accept an ultimatum, Señorans deployed troops in Buenos Aires to proceed on that path. But the military and anti-integrationist politicians, inside and outside the Government, operated that afternoon to avoid an armed confrontation and managed to get President Guido to receive Toranzo Montero that same night in the Presidential Quinta de Olivos. Señorans considered it unacceptable to negotiate with a military man who was “in open rebellion” and faced with the imminence of an armed confrontation, he resigned immediately – just 10 hours after taking office.

The next morning, the commanders of the two military sides were summoned by President Guido to Olivos and placed in separate rooms, in order to negotiate the appointment of a new Secretary of War with them. Toranzo Montero demanded that General Arturo Ossorio Arana be appointed; Arana was a hard-liner who had been part of the coup group that overthrew Frondizi. Guido himself

rejected that proposal/demand and finally both sides agreed to name General José Octavio Cornejo Saravia, a retired artillery officer who was against calling elections and was in favour of establishing a semi-permanent dictatorship for a period of no less than 10 years. President Guido appointed also General Juan Carlos Lorio as Commander-in-Chief of the Army.

The appointment of Cornejo Saravia overcame the crisis, at least temporarily, but the new Secretary of War promoted in cabinet the need for the Government to evolve towards an open dictatorship, dissolving Congress, suspending union action and occupying the General Confederation of Labour (CGT). Cornejo Saravia's position was not accepted in its entirety, but he managed to get Guido to decree that the CGT lacked legality, to decree the “freezing of Congress” and to commit himself to holding presidential elections only with the participation of Peronism, through indirect suffrage with a voting system and proportional representation, so that no political party would reach the necessary quorum to elect the president in the Electoral College, so that the majority

maintained by Guido in Congress would elect General Pedro Eugenio Aramburu as President.

The electoral solution designed by Guido had the support of Frondizi, still in prison, and some sectors of Peronism, and managed to proceed for a few days. But on 4 September 1962, the military leadership headed by the three military secretaries – of War, Navy and Aeronautics – represented by the new Secretary of War Cornejo Saravia, presented Guido with a *cartilla* (list) of 32 political, economic, social and administrative measures, one of which was to dissolve Congress, paving the way for Guido's plan. The Military *cartilla* evidenced the strengthening of the hard-line anti-Peronist in the cabinet. The same month, General Lorio ordered the arrest of Colonel Roberto Arredondo, Director of the Army Mechanics School, of his Deputy Director, Lieutenant Colonel Carlos Padrós, and his own corps chief, Lieutenant Colonel Ramón Molina, for organising clandestine meetings.

Giving in to pressure from the military leadership, Guido issued a decree on 6 September declaring Congress ‘in recess’, and calling legislative elections for 27 October 1963. Strengthened by the dissolution of Congress, the hard-line “anti-integrationist” grouping set out to advance the control of oil through a system of



Once again and in the face of the new crisis, Sherman tanks were mobilised on both sides but President Guido was able to solve the crisis without bloodshed. (Ejército Argentino)

private concessions and the unions, with a union law that would considerably reduce the unions' power.

This plan of "the hard" was interrupted that same September, by a new period of confrontation between military factions, where the 'legalist' grouping would call itself the Azul side, a military term used in exercises to differentiate one side, and the hard-liner "anti-integrationist" sector, which had taken over the cabinet, as the Colorado side, a term used in war games for the enemy.

At the end of August, a group of colonels, most of them from the cavalry, met in Campo de Mayo Cavalry School in what was known as the Azul Command. That group included colonels Manuel Laprida, Alcides López Aufranc, Julio E. Aguirre and José R. Herrera, with the support of Colonel Alejandro Lanusse and General Julio Alsogaray, they collectively

formed a clandestine General Staff. They decided to invite General Juan Carlos Onganía to assume command of the movement; an offer which he accepted. The Azul staff realised that at that moment they controlled very few combat units, and their main strength was at Campo de Mayo. In Buenos Aires, they counted on the Army Mechanics School and the Grenadier Regiment, the C-8 Armoured Regiment in Magdalena and most of the cavalry units in the interior of the country. The other units in and around the Capital were controlled by the Colorados, who also controlled most of the infantry units in the interior of the country.

As it is easy to imagine, faced with this situation, the Azules felt restless and on 17 September they met with the former Minister of Defence of Frondizi, Dr Rodolfo Martínez Jr, who until recently held the portfolio of the Interior, to ask him to mediate with the President. At the same time, they requested the resignations of Generals Lorio and Labayru because, in their opinion, their return to active duty violated military legislation, since their retirement was final and irreversible. Because of this, there was the removal of three chiefs of the Campo de Mayo garrison, General Pascual Pistarini, Commander of the Cavalry, General Julio Alsogaray, Commander of Armoured Cavalry Division Nr.1 and Chief of Campo de Mayo, and General Eduardo Luchessi, Chief of the General Staff. Brigadier General Carlos Augusto Caro replaced Alsogaray, retaining his position as Under-Secretary of War. Colonel Rodolfo Amicarelli was appointed Director of the Army Mechanics School.

On the same day, 18 September, at 7:00 p.m., the Federal Police was kept in their barracks and an hour later the news arrived that General Osiris Villegas, commander of the IV Cavalry Division in Concordia, had risen in revolt, giving his support to the rebel command. General Caro surprised the commanders by surreptitiously showing up at Campo de Mayo to hold meetings



Troops responding to the rebel Major General Federico Toranzo Montero on combat alert in the Motorised Division Nr.1 in Palermo, Buenos Aires. Note the use of the Swiss helmet on the soldier on duty at one of the entrances to the aforementioned base. (AP photo)



General Osiris Guillermo Villegas, Commander of the IV Cavalry Division in Concordia. The IV Cavalry Division Headquarters in the city of Concordia, in the Province of Entre Ríos. (Public Domain)

with Alsogaray, Pistarini and Colonel Alejandro Agustín Lanusse. At 7:30 p.m. he spoke alone with Onganía and when he left, after 8:00 p.m., he said that he would go to the Secretary of War to present his resignation and return to the Campo de Mayo garrison in order to join the rebellion. The political situation was serious given that Campo de Mayo did not accept the changes made by the President, thus finding itself in rebellion by not obeying orders from the Executive Power. Once again, as in 1955, Argentina was on the verge of an armed confrontation.

THE CLASHES OF SEPTEMBER 1962

Azul Mutiny

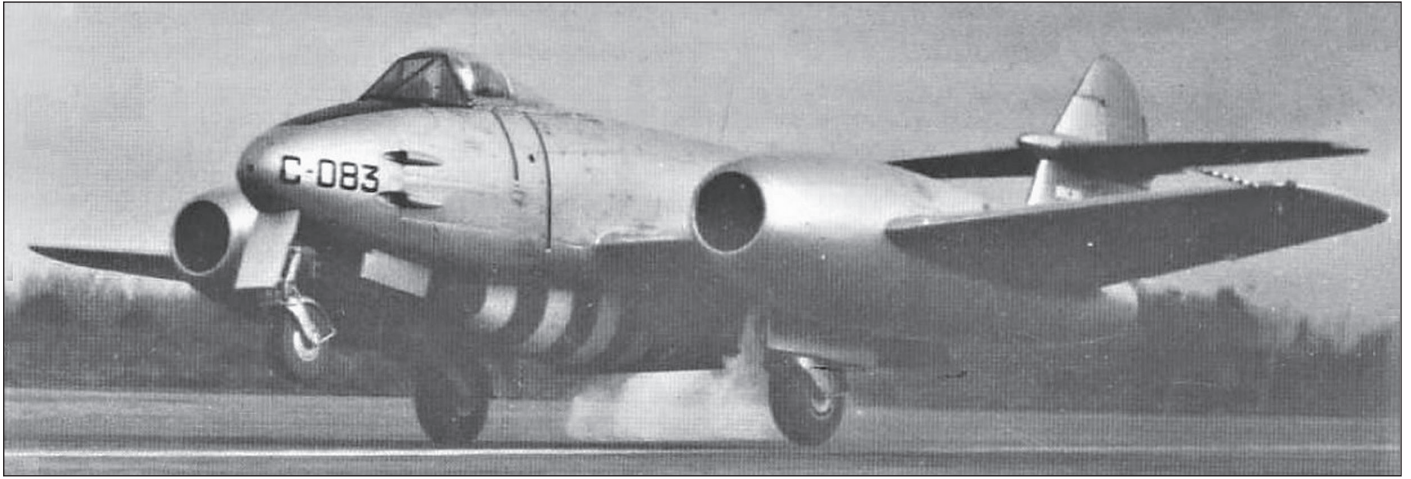
When the hard military group, openly anti-Peronist, had taken over the key positions of the Guido Government (Ministry of Defence, Secretary of War, Under-Secretaries of each arm of the military, Army headquarters) and were in full pursuit of the installation of a permanent military force dictatorship, counter-attacked the professionalists, also calling themselves legalists. On 13 September 1962, Campo de Mayo officials released a document entitled Army Objectives and Resolution, the so-called 'Campo de Mayo Memorandum', which severely questioned the military leadership for separating the Army from its professional role, surrounding President Guido to annul its capacity for action and "promote dictatorship." To

the Army of the 'political military', the officers of Campo de Mayo proposed another model of Army, that of 'professional military',

The real Army is the Army that wants to be commanded by professional soldiers and not by groups of political soldiers; The Army that wants to be an Army and not a group of armed gangs; The Army in which military laws and regulations are respected and applied without discrimination; The Army of Justice, the basis of discipline; The Army to guard the Constitution and the laws; The Army to serve the Nation and not to judge and submit it.¹



The trigger for the confrontation between Colorados and Azules was the attempted dismissal of (left) Generals Alsogaray and (right) Pistarini. (Public Domain)



A Gloster Meteor F.Mk.4 interceptor fighter of the Argentine Air Force taking off. (Dr Atilio Marino collection)



On the first day of the conflict, armoured vehicles and Sherman tanks from both sides were mobilised in preparation for operations. (Archivo General de la Nación)



Two prominent lawyers were involved in the "Psychological War" on the Azul side. On the left, José Miguens and on the right, Mariano Grondona. (Public domain)

All this explicitly raised the deep differences that separated the two sides, only the spark was missing that would trigger the full-on fight. That spark was the decision of the Secretary of War, Cornejo Saravia, to relieve the Commander of the Army Cavalry based in Campo de Mayo, General Pascual Pistarini, and his deputy, General Julio Rodolfo Alsogaray.

On 18 September 1962, the Commander of Campo de Mayo, General Juan Carlos Onganía, ignored Cornejo Saravia's order,

counting on the support of General Osiris Villegas, in command of the troops located in Mesopotamia, and Colonels Alcides López Aufranc and Tomás Sánchez de Bustamante, who had direct command of the strategic Tank Cavalry Regiment C-8 located in Magdalena, 108 kilometres from the Army Command, in front of the Casa Rosada. The mutineers demanded the dismissal of Generals Juan Carlos Lorio and Bernardino Labayru, respectively, Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Chief of Staff.

From the outset, the Azules, who had mutinied under the command of Onganía,

launched a psychological war, led by Colonel José María Díaz, and commanded by a team of soldiers, but also civilians, including José Enrique Miguens, a lawyer and sociologist, with sympathies towards Peronism, closely connected with the traditional sectors of the Catholic Church. The Azul side's Psychological Action Section wrote 150 communiqués, to which was added an additional one written by the Catholic lawyer Mariano Grondona. In these communiqués and, in the midst of the confusion generated by the internal fracture

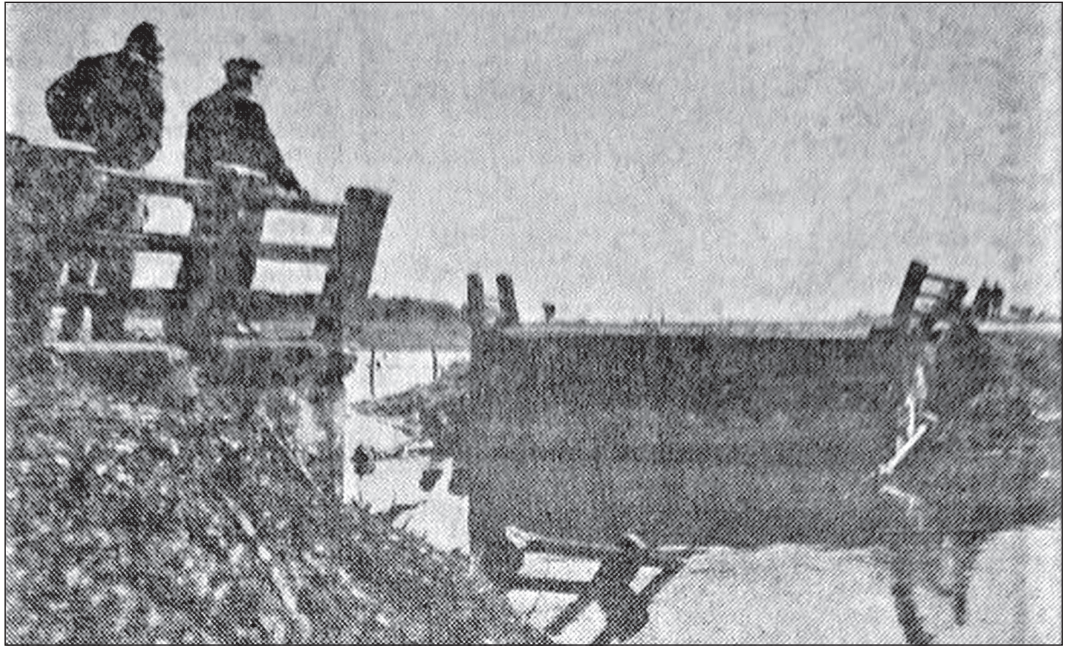
of the Armed Forces, the Azules presented themselves as the group that defended the Constitution and democracy, and for that they wanted to form professional Armed Forces, with a strict chain of command, which could guarantee the independence of President Guido to quickly organise free presidential elections from which a legitimate and stable constitutional government would emerge. The Azules sought to restore the unity of the Armed Forces, affected by the deliberative state generated by the constant intervention of the military in political life, and described the Colorado side as 'coup plotters' and supporters of a long-term military dictatorship.

In view of the immanent events, during September 1962, the VI Air Brigade instigated the deployment of some Gloster Meteor F.Mk.4 interceptor fighters to the dirt runway of the Mazaruca Island polygon (Province of Entre Ríos) as a preventive measure.

19 September

On the first full day of the Azul-Colorado conflict, combat units of both sides were deployed, primarily those of the Motorised Division Nr.1 and Infantry Division Nr.2, which were loyal to Generals Lorio and Labayru. At the same time, C-8 Tank Regiment based at Magdalena in the south of the city of La Plata, began its march to Campo de Mayo to link up with other units of the First Armoured Division Nr.1.

On the night of 19 September 1962, a series of explosions violently woke up the residents of Berisso, Ensenada and the northeast sector of La Plata. The first took place at 3:12 a.m. and shook houses and buildings. Many civilians took to the streets to see what was happening and 10 minutes later another explosion was heard. It was thought that it was some kind of military uprising like the one in 1955. The police stations in the area sent patrol cars to investigate but did not find anything abnormal until dawn, when they saw that the bridge over the Zapata stream had been dynamited. The policemen sent a report to their station and the message was also radioed to the Central Police Station in Buenos Aires, which confirmed that members of the Army Division Nr.2 (Colorados) based in the provincial capital, had carried out the action because of the possibility of an advance of Tanks of the C-8 Tank Regiment 'General Necochea' (Azules) from Magdalena. The second detonation had knocked down the bridge located on the road to Ignacio Correás, southeast of La Plata, in the middle of the rural sector, and the third destroyed a culvert near the Caxaraville stream.



Dynamited bridge over the Zapata stream, near La Plata. (Diario La Prensa)

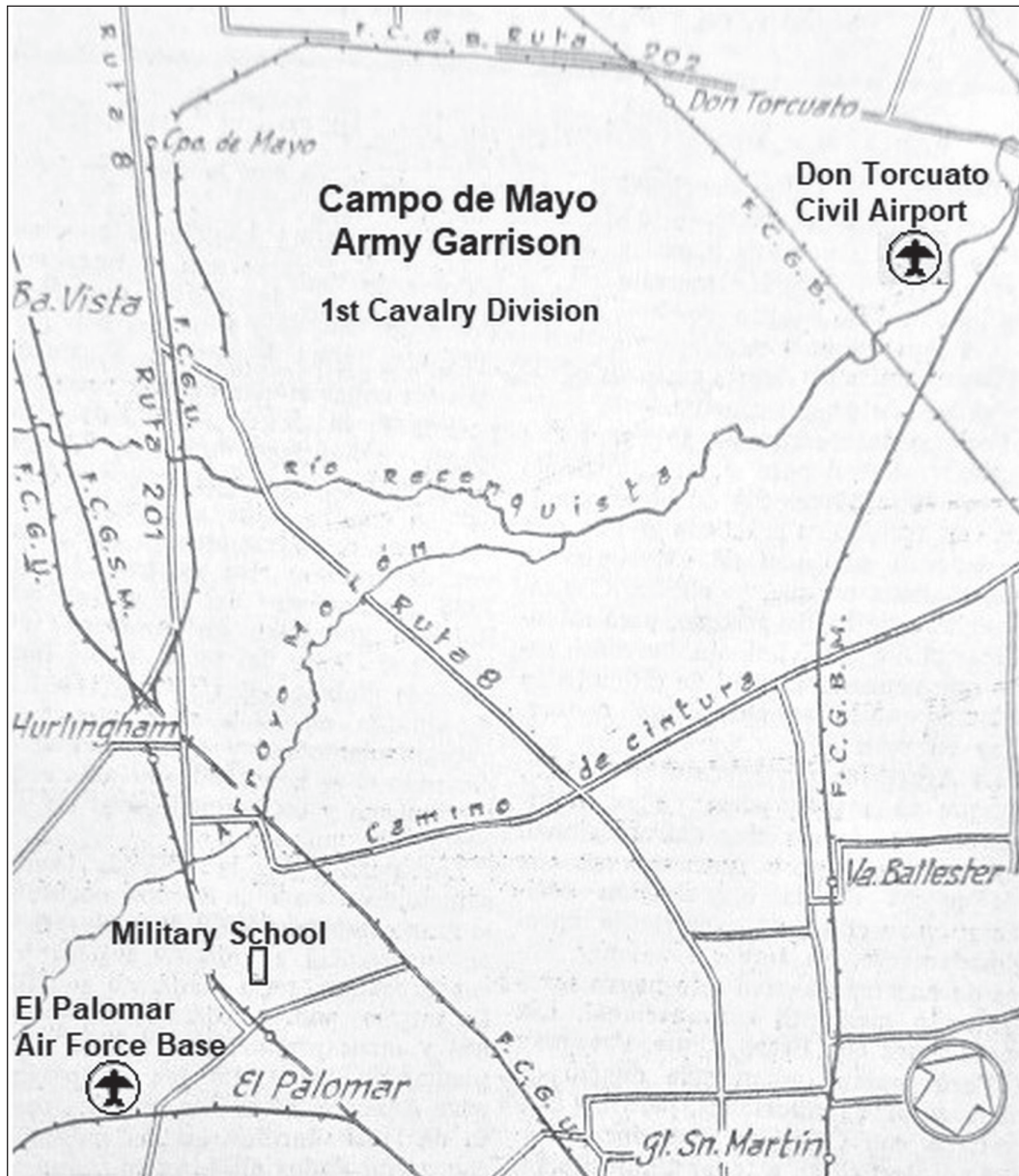


Soldiers of the La Plata Military Geographic Battalion (photo) were mobilised by the Colorados. (Public Domain)

About 9 a.m. stories began to circulate that an armoured column was advancing along the coastal highway in the direction of Campo de Mayo, where rebel forces that were unaware of the authority of the command-in-chief of the Army and the Secretary of War, had set up their command centre under the orders of General Juan Carlos Onganía.

In view of this, the Division Nr.2 was mobilised; the Division's Commander, Colonel Marco Aurelio Lobo, maintained constant contact with the loyal authorities. With the news that the tanks had diverted and entered the suburbs of La Plata, the Military Geographic Battalion, located on 51st Street (between 19th and 20th) left barracks and headed towards the Federal Capital along the Centennial Road. Soldiers equipped for war crowded into the back of the eight military trucks that also transported batteries and the field kitchens. They were followed by medical and auxiliary service vehicles, in addition to some private transport, leaving only 40 soldiers at the base. Immediately behind the departed unit were Infantry Regiment Nr.7 and the Communications Battalion 601, whose barracks were located in Parque Pereyra Iraola and the town of City Bell, respectively. They moved in their own transport units and in other vehicles seized from along the National Roads and from private individuals.

Believing that the rebel tanks were heading for Etcheverry via 44th Avenue, the above units stopped at the Florencio Varela intersection



The main Azul base was located in Campo de Mayo. (Diario La Prensa)

and took up positions covering Route 2 and all its approaches. The soldiers dug trenches and erected barricades using all kinds of vehicles, especially trucks, tractors, and buses. Immediately afterwards they set up heavy machine guns and several soldiers took up positions on the rooftops, armed with automatic weapons and flamethrowers. It was important that they contained the armoured column and prevent it from entering the Federal Capital or moving towards Campo de Mayo, if that was their intention.

The same morning the false information was spread that military helicopters had spotted the tanks in the vicinity of Etcheverry and that the latter were preparing to cross through La Plata – something that was impossible because at the time they were still in their Magdalena Base. In fact, the pilots made passes over the base and that allowed them to see the preparations that were being made, definite proof that they were ready to leave imminently.

In the afternoon, Colonel Lobo went to the Buenos Aires Government House to hold a meeting with the federal commissioner in charge of the Executive, Dr Ceferino Merbilh  a, with whom he was to coordinate future actions, including the implementation of the CONINTES plan (Internal Commotion of the State)

and the deployment of the provincial police.

From an early hour, the police stations had interrupted traffic in their vicinity under a decision of the Executive Power, classes were suspended throughout the district (a measure that would be extended to the national level in later days) and non-scheduled flights were prohibited.

The suppression commanders already knew that the rebel chiefs had set up their operations centre in the Logistics Instruction Centre of the General Lemos Professional School in Campo de Mayo and that General Ongan  a was in command of them. Their staff was comprised of Generals Pascual Pistarini and Julio Alsogaray, and Colonel Alejandro Agust  n Lanusse.

At 10 a.m., two assault cars from the Azules rebel garrison stopped in front of the offices of the LR3 Radio Belgrano, in Bella Vista and after cordoning off the area, they took over the station and proceeded to broadcast the first communiqu  s, clarifying that they were mobilising in defence of the presidential authority. The troops were led by a captain and had two mortars with them, which they set up on each side of the building, posting guards at its

doors and other nearby points. A problem with the transmission equipment forced them to send for a new transmitter which, once installed, allowed the reports to be broadcast. The first of them was issued at 11:10 a.m., it said:

Comrades, We are willing to fight so that the people can vote. Are you willing to fight so they don't vote? Communism emerged from Russia after the dictatorship of the Czars; in Cuba after the Batista dictatorship. Communism always arises after dictatorships. Never before.²

Comunicu   Nr.2 was signed by General Ongan  a, and explained in detail the position of the mutineers, in defence of President Guido and prompt elections, alleging that the Colorados who surrounded Guido sought to weaken him in order to install a military dictatorship:

In my capacity as senior officer of the forces stationed in Campo de Mayo, I assume the responsibility of signing this communication, with which I address the comrades from the interior of the country,



The Azul Logistics Instruction Centre of the General Lemos Professional School in Campo de Mayo. (Public Domain)

the other Armed Forces and public opinion in general, to let them know synthetically the objective pursued with the attitude that we have assumed. For greater clarity, it is convenient to transcribe, in essence, the resolution adopted to ensure the objectives currently threatened. National objective: to maintain and strengthen the current Executive Power and ensure it the sufficient and necessary freedom of action, to the extent that its mission is conducive to the fulfilment of the commitments contracted with the people of the Nation, in order to specify in the shortest term of the validity of the Constitution. Military objective: fight to restore justice and discipline, respect for military laws and regulations, and their application without discrimination of any kind.

General Juan Carlos Onganía³

They continued like this, uninterrupted, until 2:30 p.m., when, faced with the threat of suppression by loyal forces, the occupants withdrew. At 12 a.m. they had requested reinforcements to strengthen the defensive perimeter, receiving two tracked vehicles with 50 troops on board an hour later, under the command of a major who reported directly to Colonel Lanusse.

The same thing happened for a short time at LR1 Radio El Mundo (San Fernando), LR4 Radio Splendid (Caseros), LR2 Radio Argentina and LR6 Radio Mitre (both in Bella Vista), as well as the General Pacheco Communications Centre, from where the insurgents broadcast their messages until around 3:00 p.m. In response to those broadcasts, the Secretary of War released its own position:

The Ministry of War informs the public opinion that the communications broadcast by the LR3 Radio Belgrano station in Buenos Aires are absolutely inaccurate and tendentious, seeking to confuse and disorient. The Army, except for some isolated units, aware of its mission to protect tranquillity and internal peace, will proceed with all firmness and energy against any attempt to subvert public order.⁴

A large part of the Army units all over the country supported the constituted authorities and the rebel units were asked to give

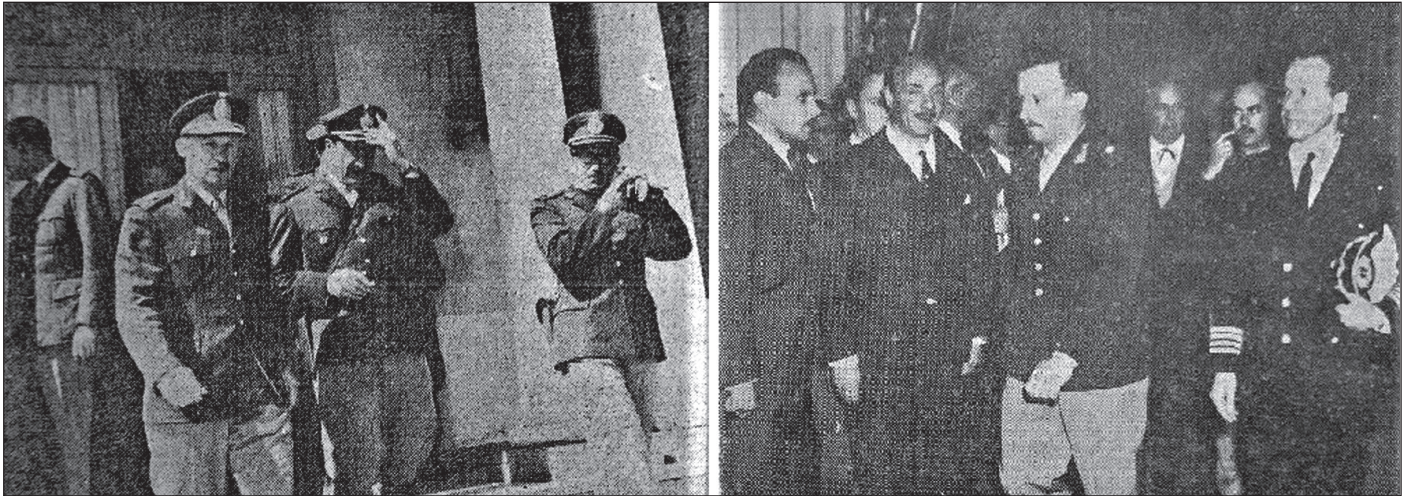
up their position, in order to avoid useless bloodshed between comrades, and also possible civilian victims.

By then, a large motorised column was advancing from the Camet Anti-Aircraft Artillery Instruction Centre towards the Federal Capital. It was commanded by Colonel Federico de la Fuente and was made up of 55 military trucks, 5 radar equipment vehicles, 2 ambulances, 9 light cannon batteries, and field kitchens. The troops were equipped for combat, with full equipment and weapons, and they carried rations for several days of operations. Additionally, the Navy and the Air Force began their mobilisation, and the citizens followed with trepidation the movements that took place in different parts of the country.

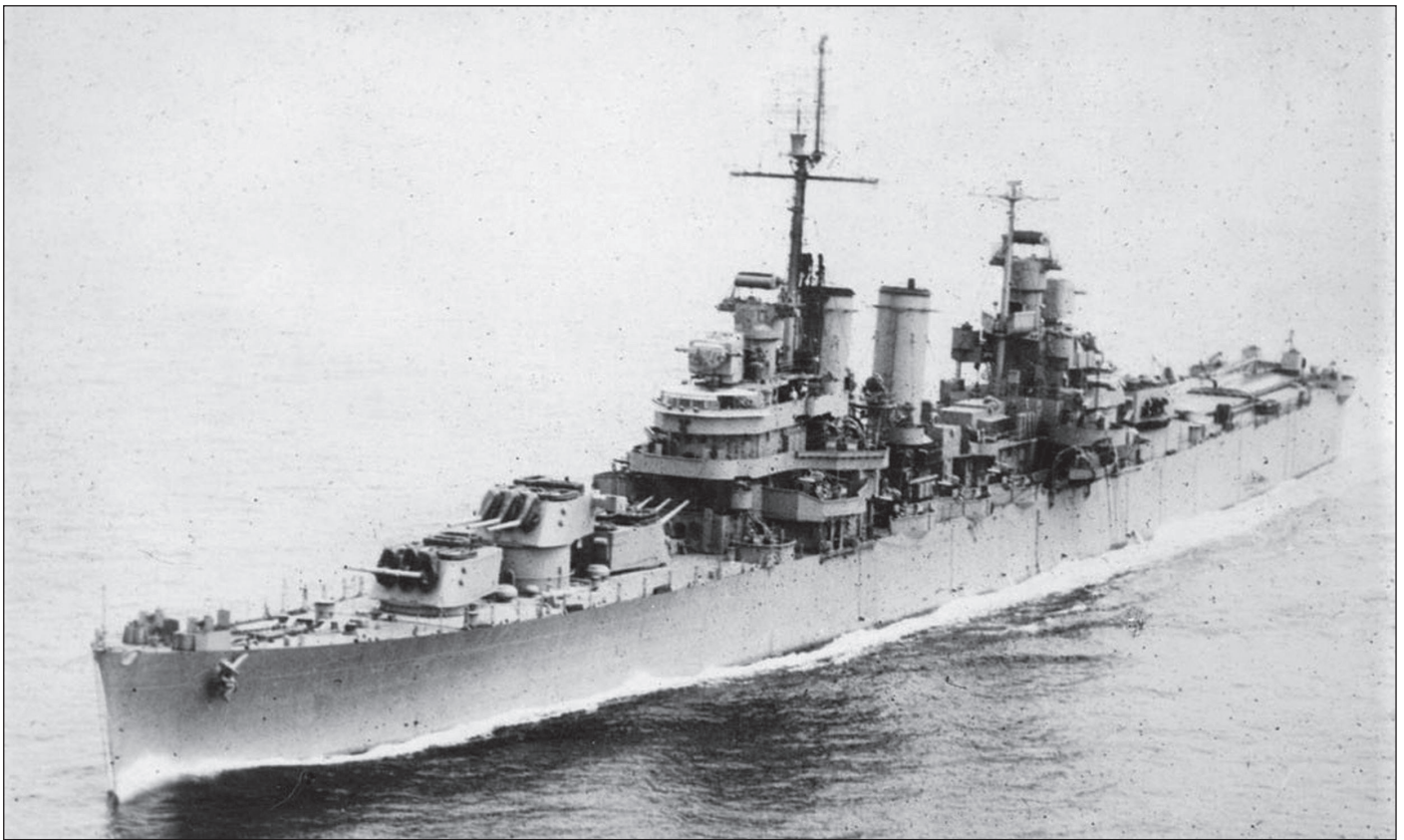
On the outskirts of La Plata, the Army requisitioned several buses from the Río de la Plata company, which were then assigned for use in the barricades that blocked the General Belgrano Road, along with trucks, tractors and trailers.

President Guido sent a written invitation to General Onganía through his Head of the Military House, Navy Captain Eduardo Lockhart. Onganía accepted this invitation and went to the Casa Rosada with Colonels Virgilio Ernesto Gorrioz, Jorge Von Stecher, Major Alfredo Saint Jean and Captain Lockhart. The meeting was very tense because the President ordered the General to abandon his position and obey the decisions of the Secretary of War. Onganía replied that he could not do that because it would leave his troops defenceless, and that the objective of the Azules was to strengthen Guido's presidential power. The Defence Minister, Adolfo Lanús, tactlessly told Onganía that he had not been summoned to talk but to receive orders. When President Guido told the rebel General that he had until 9 p.m. to give up his attitude, the rebel officers stood up and left the place. Onganía's disobedience to the direct order of the President allowed the Colorado leadership to initiate the actions for the repression of the mutineers. At 10:30 p.m., when the CONINTES plan was implemented, preparations were being made in the Motorised Infantry regiments Nr.1 and Nr.2 in Palermo, where journalists could see in the distance, columns of trucks and carriers lined up to receive troops and move out.

The loyal command was set up in the Secretariat of War under the command of General Juan Carlos Lorio. The Country's interior



Left, General Onganía (second from the left) with his General Staff in Campo de Mayo. Right, General Onganía, accompanied by Navy Captain Eduardo Lockhart, arriving at the Casa Rosada for a meeting with President Guido. (*Diario La Prensa*)



The heavy cruiser C-5 ARA 9 de Julio (the former USS Boise CL-47) of the Argentine Navy. (Histarmar Archive)

garrisons remained expectant, some of them in quarters, others, especially the Navy, preparing to impose the CONINTES plan. The remaining units announced their loyalty to the commanders in their chain of command (Executive Branch/Command-in-Chief of the Army/Secretariat of War) and prepared for suppression, except for Concordia, which had joined the movement.

At 6:00 p.m., troops from the Artillery Command based in city of Azul had begun the advance towards the Federal Capital. They had crossed Monte by Route 3 and continued towards Cañuelas, trying to reach the Urban Cone that same night. In Puerto Belgrano, the Navy readied its units and ordered the heavy cruiser ARA 9 de Julio (C-5) to set sail immediately for Buenos Aires, with its personnel ready to go into action. The ship had arrived just two days earlier and was preparing for a routine mission in Golfo Nuevo.

At 9 p.m. the Anti-Aircraft Artillery Training Centre troops began to cross Dolores. So large was the formation, that when its vanguard arrived at the historic town, its rearguard was still in General Guido. At the same time, a section of the Sargento Cabral NCO School, made up of 60 trucks, 4 buses, 3 Sherman tanks, 6 half-track vehicles and 4 jeeps, arrived at La Noria Bridge transporting 800 heavily armed troops, anti-aircraft guns, anti-tank guns, automatic weapons – and sanitary equipment.

In view of such movements, Campo de Mayo adopted rigorous security measures, mustering all personnel to enter combat. In compliance with these directives, the guards were reinforced, a security perimeter was established, mobile patrols were organised, accesses were blocked and a meticulous identification system was imposed that included all levels, from the enlisted soldiers to higher rank officers. The rebel operations command, set up at the General

Lemos School, was the scene of a busy movement, with permanent meetings between its General Staff, headed by General Onganía and made up of Generals Pascual A. Pistarini, Julio Alsogaray, Juan E. Iavicoli, Martín Sueldo, Carlos Peralta and Colonels Alejandro Agustín Lanusse and Jaime Toscano.

At the end of the day on 19 September, Cavalry Division Nr.2 and Cavalry Regiment Nr.6 of Concordia were in rebellion in the interior, as well as the Cavalry Division Nr.4 from Corrientes, Cavalry Regiment Nr.9 and the Horse Artillery Group Nr.4 from Mercedes, the Training Centre for Engineers from Concepción del Uruguay and the Infantry Regiment Nr.7 from Chajarí. To counter them, troops were mobilised from Santa Fe, Paraná, Diamante, Villaguay, Gualaguaychú, Rosario del Tala and General Paz, which moved towards Concordia and Concepción del Uruguay trying to neutralise the forces of General Osiris Villegas.

Overall, the situation seemed to favour the Colorado troops who controlled government positions with Generals Lorio and Labayru, but by dawn the next day, that Colorado predominance began to weaken, when the Commander-in-Chief of the Air Force announced that it would not repress the Azules, contrary to the support for the Colorados that had been expressed by the Secretary of Aeronautics, Brigadier Jorge Rojas Silveyra, at the same time desertions in the Army in favour of the Azul side increased. That first day there were no combats and the only battle was the battle of comunicués, both sides trying to win the support of the undecided.

20 September

At first light on 20 September, on the side of the Colorado troops, the gates of the great military garrison in Palermo were opened and several military vehicles leading the Motorised Infantry regiments Nr.1 and Nr.2 came out. The column of 20 trucks took Santa Fe Avenue and continued along Cabildo, towards General Paz Avenue, bound to Riachuelo.

Troops travelled in full equipment and carried several days' worth of supplies in case of fighting. At almost the same time effectives of the Mechanised Infantry Regiment Nr.3 (RIM3) from La Tablada occupied the Villa Lugano station of the General Belgrano Railway, while the column of Artillery Group 2 (G2A) from the town of Azul advanced along the Morón road, bound for the General Ricchieri Highway where it had to stop to deploy its forces. The few witnesses who circulated around the place saw that military unit arrive at dawn and the troops take up positions. In addition to their military vehicles, they brought with them large farm trucks and private buses, the former carrying 75mm cannon and anti-tank guns. Additionally, airborne troops from Córdoba and the Infantry Regiment Nr.12 from Santa Fe were summoned to Buenos Aires by the Colorado Command. At mid-morning, the Military Geographic Battalion from La Plata, the Infantry Regiment Nr.7 and the Communications Battalion Nr.2 from City Bell left. The three corps advanced along the Centenario Road towards Route 2. The Navy, for its part traditionally anti-Peronist, joined the Colorado side and gave the order for the heavy cruiser ARA *9 de Julio* and other ships that had participated in the recent UNITAS VII Operation, to sail towards Buenos Aires. To stop the Azul troops, the Colorado forces installed three barricades at the Etcheverry Crossing, on Route 2: one made with a train, another with 28 requisitioned trucks, and the third with trucks equipped with guns from the Anti-Aircraft Artillery of Mar del Plata, based in Camet, under the command of Major Merbilháa.

Given the magnitude of the forces that the Ministry of War was mobilising, the Azul rebel command in Campo de Mayo contacted

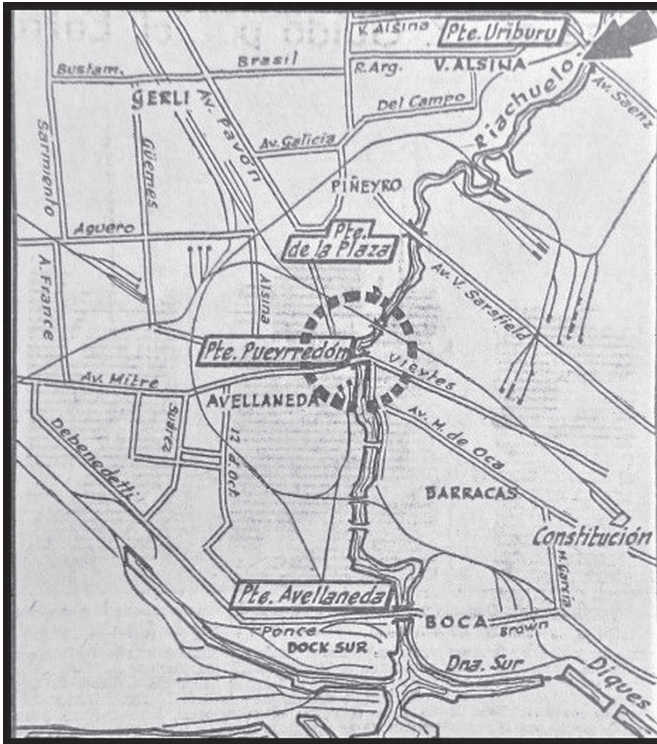


Colonel Alcides López Aufranc, Commander of the C.8 Cavalry Tank Regiment in Magdalena. (Public domain)

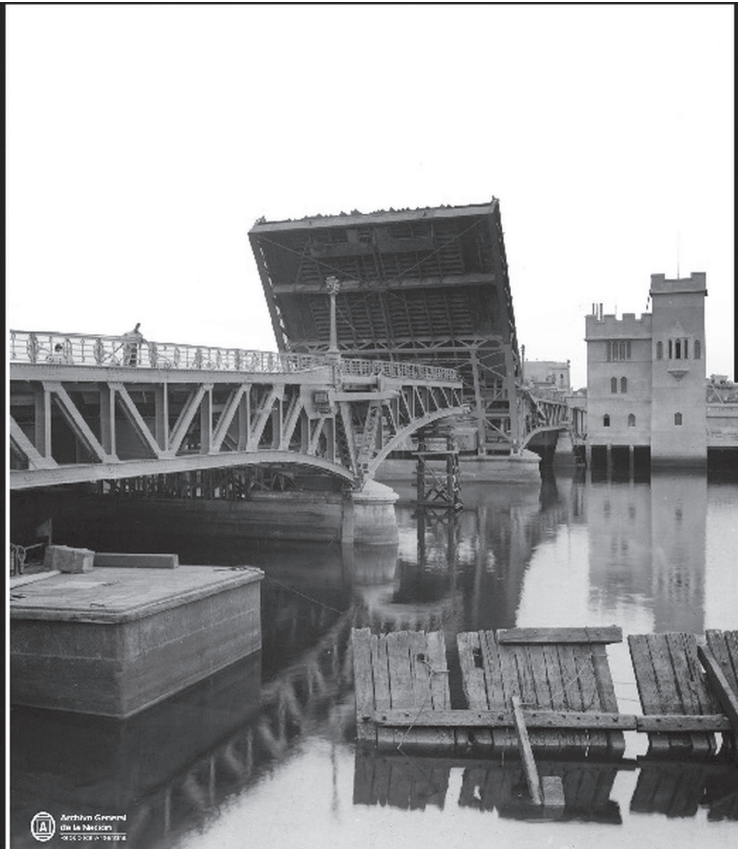
the Magdalena Armoured Cavalry Regiment Nr.8 (C-8) and ordered its commander, Colonel Alcides López Aufranc, to deploy his forces to Buenos Aires. This powerful unit had 35-ton, M4 Sherman tanks, modernised and equipped in Argentina with 105mm French guns, smoke launchers, 520-hp Poyaud diesel engines, communications equipment and improved firing direction. Those tanks advanced avoiding the dynamited bridges, and following the direction of Camino Costa Sud (later Route 36). The idea was to surround the Colorados in a pincer movement, with the armoured vehicles from Campo de Mayo on one side and the Magdalena ones on the other, before the Airborne Troops School arrived in the Federal Capital. At the same time, Campo de Mayo had mobilised 14 Sherman tanks, 32 T16 carriers and several troop trucks in readiness for combat.

At 11:55 an observation plane responding to Campo de Mayo flew over the Colorado positions in Etcheverry, which brought their anti-aircraft guns into play, forcing it away. According to some versions, it was a small single-engine two-seater light plane flying at an altitude of 1,000 metres followed by another that had to make sharp turns to avoid the projectiles. In its evasive manoeuvre it made a pronounced descent and, staying close to the ground, moved away in the direction of the Río de la Plata.

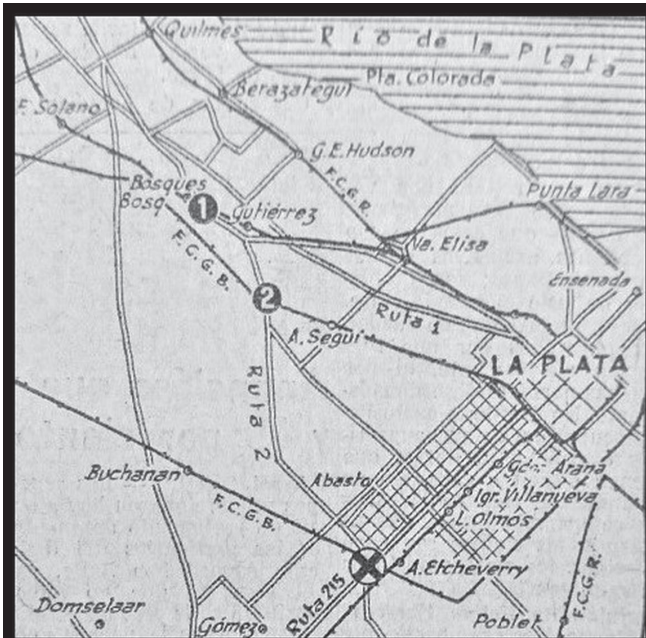
At 3:30 p.m. the first combat of the day took place on the Pueyrredón Bridge, or more precisely on the Avellaneda side, where a section of the Tank Cavalry Regiment Nr.10 (C-10), troops from Horse Grenadier Regiment, and an Armoured Engineering battalion. Their commander, Lieutenant Colonel Rodrigo Alejandro Soloaga, who answered directly to General Tomás Sánchez de Bustamante, had installed his command post in the middle of the road, at 600 Mitre Avenue, and from there he arranged to advance towards the General Roca Railroad viaduct. Finding themselves the target of artillery and automatic weapons, the tanks stopped and at the intersection of Mitre and Chacabuco streets, they swung their turrets while inside the tanks the gunners hurriedly loaded their guns. When the objective was in sight, they fired the first shots while machine gun nests located on top of a construction site in front of the Riachuelo, battered the positions on the other side of it. During the confrontation, no deaths or injuries are recorded, but at



Area adjacent to the Riachuelo where the fighting took place.



Left, the first clashes between Azules and Colorados took place in the Pueyrredón Bridge area, in Avellaneda (Diario La Prensa). Right, the Pueyrredón Bridge in Buenos Aires (Archivo General de la Nación).



The X indicates the approximate location where the battle took place between the column of tanks from the Magdalena 8th Regiment (Azules) and troops from La Plata 7th Infantry Regiment (Colorados). The numbers 1 and 2 represent the barricades built.



Left, map indicating the combat at the Etcheverry crossroads. Right, a column of Sherman tanks from the Magdalena Regiment C.8 advancing towards the Federal Capital (above). Trucks barricaded to stop the Azul forces burning after an attack (below). (Diario La Prensa)

least four trucks were destroyed, giving off large flames and dense columns of smoke.

At 04:10 pm, another confrontation took place at the Etcheverry Crossing. The Azules, commanded by Colonel López Aufranc, moved with determination and forced the Colorado troops to

withdraw. The Azul tanks overwhelmed the Colorado troops and continued towards the Capital. The column that was leaving Avellaneda was made up of three Sherman tanks, six carriers, eleven military trucks, nine commandeered buses, at least one ambulance and several jeeps. It was during these clashes that the first casualties occurred; a police corporal was killed and several rebel officers and soldiers were wounded, as were some civilians who were in the area.

Before the immediate arrival of the tanks and the rest of the Azul troops into the Capital, the Colorado commanders were ordered to install barricades and stationed troops on Paseo Colón Avenue, the intersection of Entre Ríos and Garay avenues (Fray Luis Beltrán Arsenal Battalion) and Parque Chacabuco (Infantry Regiments Nr.1 and Nr.2), to defend the Libertador Building and the Casa Rosada.

Faced with the Azul advance, the Navy issued a strong statement, urging Onganía's troops to cease hostilities and reach a new agreement between the different military groups to reorganise the government:

It would seem that what is happening in the Republic is part of a premeditated plan to provoke general chaos and deliver the country to any type of communism and extremism, the achievement of which would be accomplished through the dissociation of the institutions. For all this, we make a general call to the other Armed Forces to immediately suspend hostilities and consequently invite the different Commands so that, with representatives of all the sectors involved, a meeting should be held as soon as possible in which the bases of the reorganisation of the national government and the necessary agreements to reach a conciliation that allows to remedy the total absence of governmental authority and put an end to the bloody fratricidal struggle between Argentines can be considered.⁵

In response to the Navy's ultimatum, General Onganía ordered the Company Nr.10 from Campo de Mayo to march on the Capital. The Navy, for its part, enlisted the I Battalion of Marine Infantry and the School of Mechanics, and arranged to defend the headquarters of the force.

The most serious event of the day took place in the afternoon when, at 6:20 p.m., two Air Force Gloster Meteor F.Mk.4 fighter-bombers of the VII Air Brigade, fighting for the Azul side, strafed a Sarmiento Railroad train in the vicinity of San Antonio de Padua (Greater Buenos Aires) with their four 20mm Hispano guns, four passengers were killed and another five were wounded. The airborne troops from Córdoba, who had come in another train, had to stop the march at Pergamino, where they seized 15 buses from the Chevallier company and civilian trucks; continuing their march towards Buenos Aires, along a route parallel to the tracks of



Marines digging trenches to defend their bases in the Federal Capital against the advance of the Azul forces. (Archivo General de la Nación)



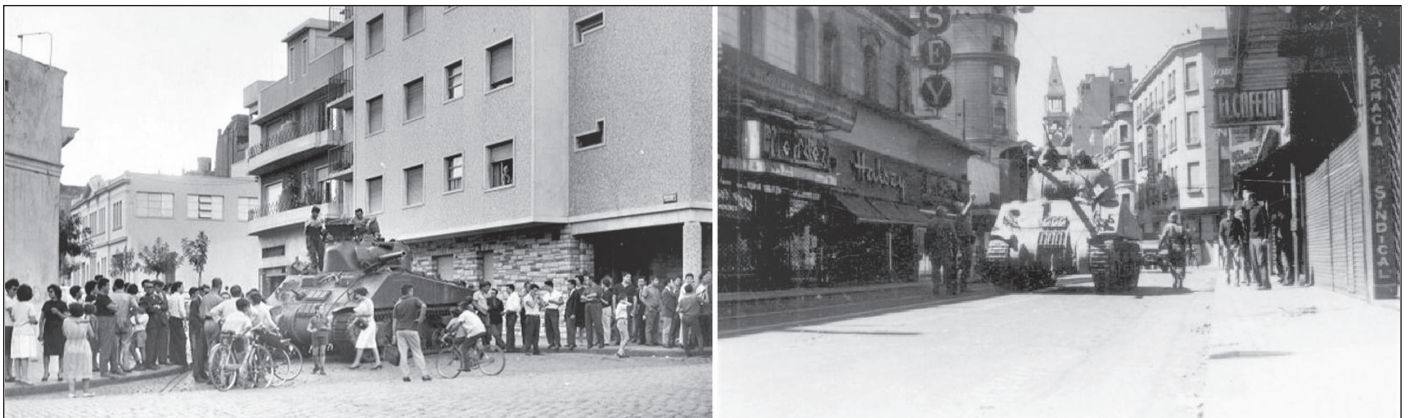
President Guido with his ministers in an emergency meeting because of the start of the military attacks. (Diario La Prensa)



Left, a train from the Domingo Faustino Sarmiento Railway. On the right, two Air Force Gloster Meteor F.Mk.4 fighters taking off. (Archivo General de la Nación/Dirección de Estudios Históricos de la Fuerza Aérea Argentina)



Left, General Julio Alsogaray and Colonel Tomás Sánchez de Bustamante, Azul leaders, answering questions from the press in Campo de Mayo. Right, General Pascual Pistarini, also Azul, doing the same. (Diario La Prensa)



During the day of 21 September, the civilian population of Buenos Aires was able to observe the movement of Sherman tanks through the streets of the city. (Diario La Nación)



Left, an impressive line-up of North American F-86F Sabre fighters at their base at El Plumerillo Airport in Mendoza, headquarters of the IV Air Brigade. Right, the Morón Airport with a Squadron of Gloster Meteor F.Mk. IV interceptor fighters in the 1950s. (Dirección de Estudios Históricos de la Fuerza Aérea Argentina)

the Sarmiento train when the Meteors appeared. These troops used their anti-aircraft weapons and the Glosters responded to the attack.

Given the position of the rebel command and the advance of its forces, at 7 p.m. the Ministry of War ordered that all access to the Federal Capital be closed off and the bridges over the Riachuelo to be lifted, a measure carried out by personnel from the Prefecture Navy (Coast Guard). These actions took the civilian population by surprise and created great inconveniences of all kinds, especially in terms of traffic and transportation.

An hour later, troops responding to the suppression command confiscated vehicles in Paseo Colón and Alsina streets, downtown

Buenos Aires, as well as on Ingeniero Huergo Avenue and Belgrano, Azopardo streets and the Customs building. To this end, the power supply was cut in order to remove the trams from their tracks and unhook the trolleybuses from the overhead cables to make roadblocks and barricades with them. In the southern area, members of the Fray Luis Beltrán Army Mechanics School did the same on Pavón Avenue, between Entre Ríos and Pichincha streets, blocking the streets with all types of transport.

Throughout that 20 September, the mediation efforts continued and, at midnight, at the request of President Guido, both sides agreed to a two-hour truce.

After the exhortation of the Archbishop of Buenos Aires calling for the unity of all Argentines, the rebel command released a new statement, in which they ordered a momentary halt to the advance:

At a request from the President of the Nation, the Commander of the Campo de Mayo forces orders the troops under his command to stop their movements between 11:15 p.m. today (on the 20) and 1:15 a.m. tomorrow, 21st of September. If no other order is received by 01:15, the troops will continue with the planned movements. It is communicated that, during this period, this command will refrain from making radio communications, except for the repetition of this one. Signed: Onganía, Brigadier General.⁶

At 11:50 p.m., General Onganía left his cantonment at the General Lemos School and went to Olivos to again meet with President Guido. The meeting was arranged by telephone through General Julio Alsogaray, who had the support of his brother Álvaro, Minister of the Economy and in charge of the Interior portfolio on an interim basis. The rebel officer arrived at his destination shortly before midnight and remained there for about four hours, trying to reach an agreement with the President and the commanders of the three branches of the armed forces.

As such agreement was not achieved, it was at that moment that the President, in a highly dramatic gesture, decided to offer his resignation to the leaders of both sides so that they could decide what to do; only to withdraw it shortly afterward at the request of the military, after determining that his departure from the government would only make things worse.

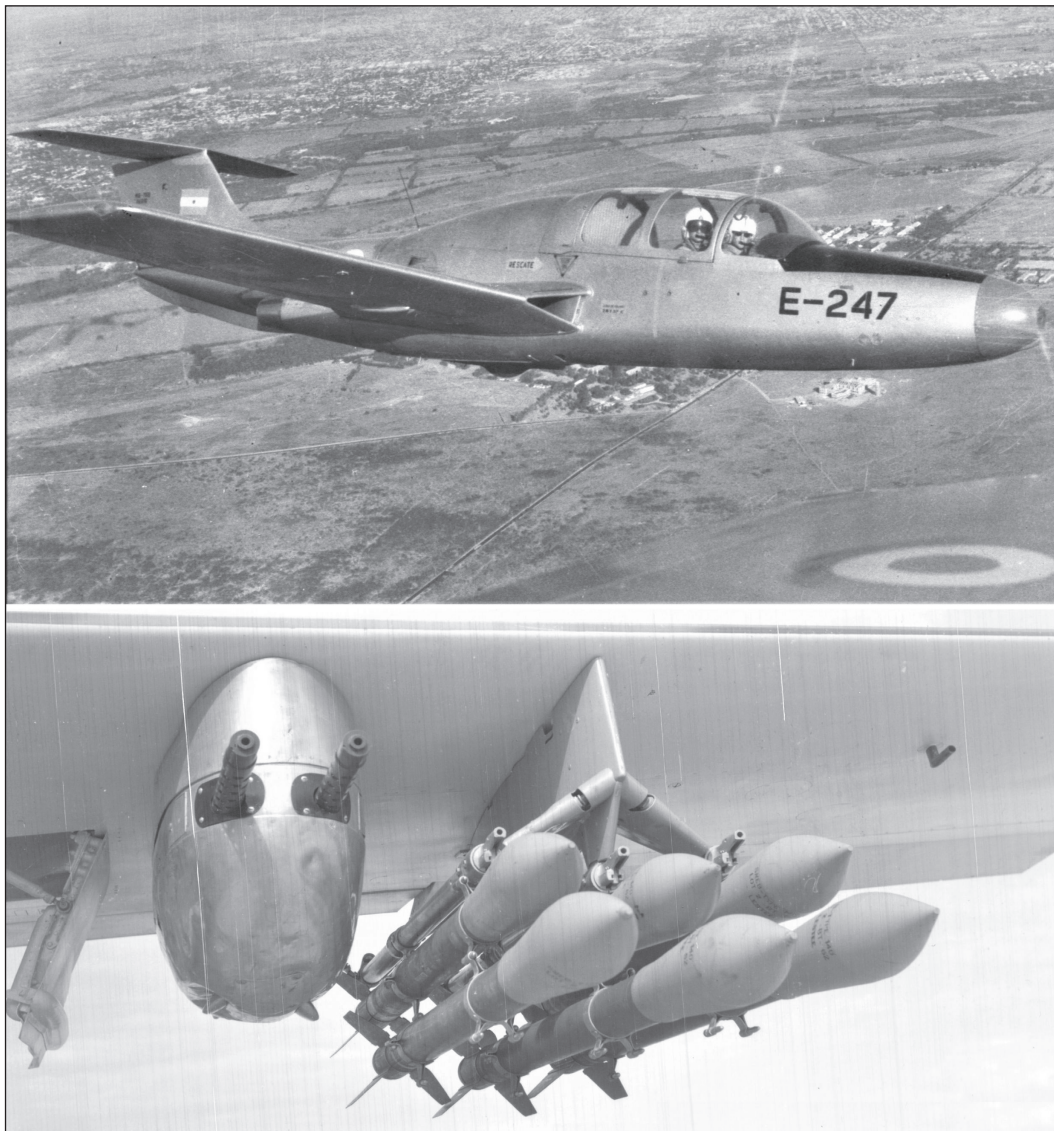
21 September

In the morning of 21 September, the newspapers carried the announcement that, after lengthy deliberations, a solution had been reached. It was even said that the President of the Nation had submitted his resignation and that both the military secretaries and General Onganía had rejected it. The news restored hope to the citizens and some relief to the government, but the level of tension did not subside. The disagreements continued and both sides continued to move their forces. What was achieved was to delay the clashes and win a few hours of truce. The lobbying followed one upon another feverishly and the comings and goings increased, sometimes generating hope but also unease.

The Azules did not obey the order to cease operations.

In the afternoon, the Cavalry Regiment Nr.10 commanded by Colonel Tomás Sánchez de Bustamante marched from Campo de Mayo to the Morón Air Base and from there to the Federal Capital. The Cavalry Regiment Nr.8, under the command of General Julio Alsogaray, entered the city of Buenos Aires through the Avellaneda Bridge. The tanks crossed that bridge and entered the Federal Capital, as far as Paseo Colón, to take up positions in Lezama Park, from Almirante Brown Avenue on Defensa Street, Brasil Avenue and Martín García Avenue, abiding by the truce and stopping a few metres from the Colorado troops defending the Libertador Building and the Casa Rosada. Colonel López Aufranc, for his part, went with the rest of the Azul officers to the Gendarmerie Centinela Building, a Colorado unit, and managed to get them to surrender, 'on their word of honour not to intervene in the custody of the building.'

Between 21 and 26 September, due to the activation of the CONINTES plan, the N.A. F-86F Sabre fighters of Air Brigade Nr.4 of the Argentine Air Force were deployed from their base at El Plumerillo in Mendoza to Morón and Villa Reynolds. The Sabre jets of CB-1 (Fighter-Bomber Group Nr.1) acted as deterrent factors, being placed at the service of the country's central government. Specifically, on the morning of 21 September, a section of the CB-1 was deployed to Morón AFB but in the afternoon it was ordered



Top, a Morane-Saulnier M.S.760 Paris of the Argentine Air Force. Bottom, an MS-760 armed with machine gun and rocket pods.(Dr Atilio Marino via Vladimiro Cettolo)

to withdraw to Villa Reynolds AFB. The next day, they returned to Morón and were on alert until the 26.

In the early hours of the 21st, it seemed that the Azules had won, because the Presidency announced through a statement that the Colorado chiefs who controlled strategic positions had resigned: Secretary of War General Cornejo Saravia, Commander-in-Chief of the Army General Lorio and the head of the War College General Laybaru. But the Colorados felt that Guido had manipulated the communiqué. Generals Lorio and Laybaru refused to accept their removal and continued directing the operations of the Colorado troops.

That day, two Morane-Saulnier M.S.760 Paris from Fighter-Bomber Group Nr.1, armed with machine guns and rockets, were seen flying over the city of Buenos Aires but without actually engaging in combat. Also on that day there were armed clashes in Constitución, Avellaneda Park, Ameghino Park and Chacabuco Park as well as constant troop movements in much of the country.

Additionally, early in the morning, members of Infantry Regiment Nr.27 from Paso de los Libres blew up the highway bridge that crossed the Tapebicuá stream on National Route 129, a clear attempt to hinder the approach of Cavalry Regiment Nr.12, which responded to the rebel command. At that time, four officers of Engineers Regiment of Goya Nr.7, who had been arrested in the morning hours, were detained in their barracks.

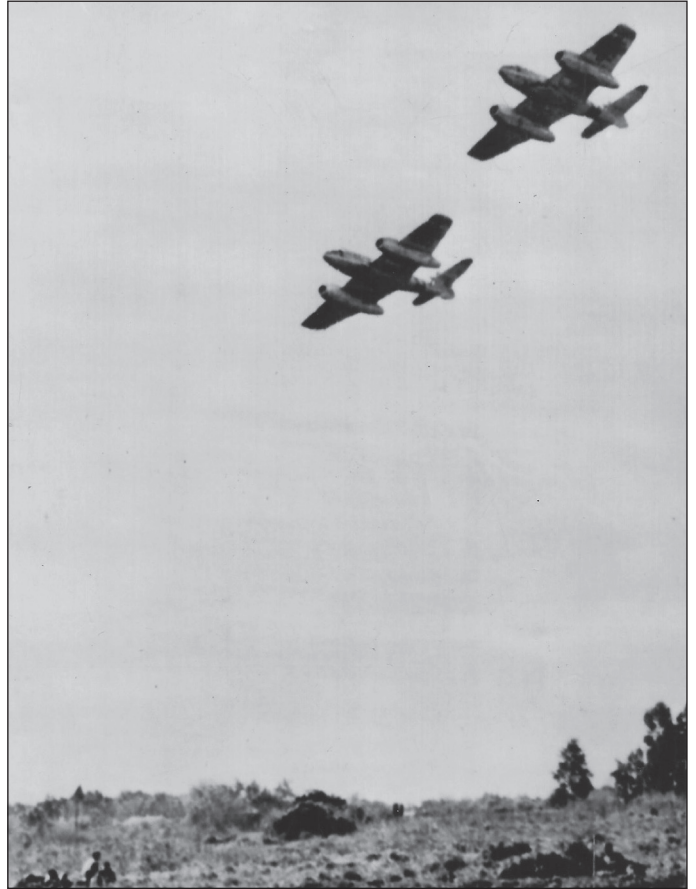
While these movements were taking place, General Enrique Rauch had seized command of the IV Division in Salta, forcing its chief, General Federico Toranzo Montero, to flee to Jujuy and establish his staff in the Mountain Infantry Regiment Nr.20. With the support of other provincial units, Toranzo announced that he was still commander of the division and ordered preparations to recover it and put it under the orders of the Secretary of War.

This is how things were when the first fighting of the day took place. After the truce requested by Guido, the troops resumed their advance. At 02:40 a.m. a motorised column from the Armoured Engineers Regiment left Campo de Mayo and took Route 202, leaving aside the General Lemos Logistics Centre. Upon reaching Route 8, it turned left and continued along that road in search of Colonel López Aufranc's unit. It was made up of 30 military vehicles, some of which towed howitzers and anti-aircraft guns.

At 03:20 a.m. another 150 transports from the C-10 Regiment left for Morón (6 Sherman tanks, 11 half-track trucks, 7 carriers, military buses, vans, ambulances and jeeps). Advancing along alternate paths, they towed artillery pieces of different calibres, anti-tank guns; they carried radio equipment, field kitchens and brought trailers with rations and ammunition. During the march they were dynamiting the road bridges with the obvious purpose of hindering the passage of enemy troops. The unit came in support of the VII Air Brigade on whose runway, more precisely at the head of it, troops from the La Tablada Motorised Infantry Regiment Nr.3 and the City of Azul Artillery Regiment had positioned themselves and threatened to initiate action. First, some Gloster Meteor fighters were sent to overfly the area, but to neutralise them, Air Force North American F-86F Sabre jets were dispatched, scheduled to arrive at 8 a.m. that morning. There was fear in the population when the fighter-bombers arrived; however, the Sabre jets limited themselves to making low passes and moved away without opening fire.

Knowing the news that the troops from Córdoba were approaching Buenos Aires, Campo de Mayo ordered a mobilisation and put all personnel on alert.

From the northwest, General Rauch communicated with Onganía to inform him that in the face of Toranzo Montero's threatening



A pair of Gloster Meteor F.Mk.IV interceptor fighters fly over Colorado troop positions near the Morón Military Air Base. (AP Photo)

attitude, he had transferred the command of IV Division to Tucumán and initiated the mobilisation in anticipation of a possible confrontation.

In the southern area of Greater Buenos Aires, the suppression forces were under the command of General Fernando Elizondo, whose command operated from the road post near the Burzaco station. In Dársena Norte (North Dock), the Marine Infantry had deployed its vehicles and was waiting in front of their barracks to start the mobilisation and nearby, around the Government House, a Sherman tank, a half-track, a carrier and three other vehicles of the Regiment of Horse Grenadiers (a Mercedes Benz military bus, another requisitioned bus and a truck), awaited the enemy in a combat position. They came from Avellaneda, from where they had left the night before, transporting a considerable number of troops, with which a defensive perimeter was organised that included Leandro N. Alem Avenue and several blocks around.

At 10:30 a.m., civilian commandos responding to the Colorado sector took over the facilities of LS11 Radio Provincia, located behind the Argentino Theatre in La Plata (51st and 10th streets) and began to spread false information clearly detrimental to the rebel command. It was a group of 15 armed people, one of them with a machine gun, who burst in unexpectedly and seized the microphones to broadcast a series of reports that responded to the Secretary of War and Infantry Division Nr.2. They left at 4:15 p.m.

Around noon, General Pistarini and Colonel Mosquera boarded an Air Force Sikorsky helicopter and flew over their own positions, returning to the command post after 1 p.m.

In Ameghino Park, troops from the Infantry Regiment Nr.2 commanded by Colonel Enrique Giménez, confronted Light Anti-Aircraft Artillery Group Nr.1 from Ciudadela led by Colonel Abel

González Álvarez. Even though both chiefs had instructions not to engage in combat, an hour and a half later (around 2:00 p.m.), after a scouting plane passed by, there was a brief but violent exchange of fire that began at the corner of Vélez Sarsfield and Los Patos streets and spread to the entire area. It was on that occasion that several civilians joined the Colorado ranks, provoking indignation among the "enemy" senior officers.

At 1:40 p.m., Gloster Meteor jets strafed LS11 Radio Provincia in the town of Olmos, at a time when proclamations were being broadcast in favour of the forces of suppression. The jets appeared from the north, flying at 800km/h and before reaching Abasto, they began to descend. The pilots located the large antenna and when they had it in their gyroscopic sights they activated their cannons. Just before it seemed that they were going to crash into the structure, they 'jumped' over the transmitting plant and moved away at high speed, reporting the results of their attack on the tower. The damage they caused was not serious and thus, at 2:30 p.m., the broadcasts resumed, spreading the fake news that the Naval Aviation had joined with the loyal forces and was preparing to fight the Air Force. Twenty minutes later, a new incursion took place, in this case with napalm bombs

that started fires and sowed panic in the nearby prison population, located a few metres away. The projectiles fell within a radius of 70 metres, with the closest ones exploding just two metres from the building and, although they did not reach the installations or the transmission antenna, they damaged underground pipes and cables.

At 2:10 p.m., tanks stationed in Brazil and Salta streets strafed an unidentified target on Lima Street and almost at the same time fired their cannon, hitting the front of the Constitución Palace Hotel. The damage to the 7th, 8th, and 9th floors was considerable, as was that to an adjoining apartment building, whose front was completely ruined; glassware was shattered and masonry had punctures and holes. The terrified guests tried to flee, running down elevators and stairs; it was necessary to contain them so that they would not go outside and be exposed to the firing. Several descended to the basement and in the mad rush, crashed into doors and windows, shattering their glass. More than one forgot to turn off the taps in



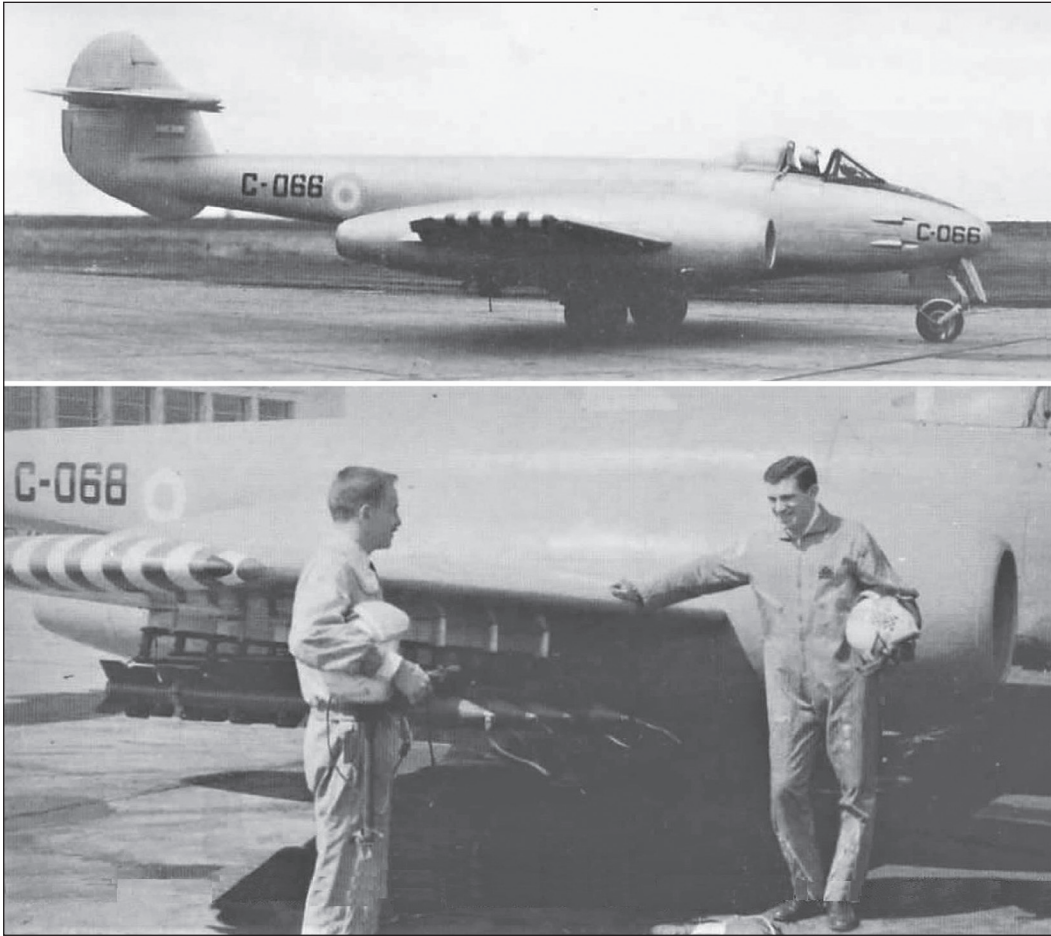
Above left, facilities of Radio Provincia LS11 in Olmos, taken over by Colorado troops and attacked by Gloster Meteor F.Mk.IV fighters of the Argentine Air Force (lower left). (Diario La Nación). Above right, NCOs loading ammunition into the Hispano guns of a Gloster Meteor. Below right, Gloster Meteor pilots in a briefing before leaving for an operational mission. From left, Lieutenant Carlos Speranza and First Lieutenants Héctor Panzardi, Alexis de Nogaetz, Hugo Giampaolletti and Juan Manuel Baigorrie. (Dirección de Estudios Históricos de la Fuerza Aérea Argentina)



Left, Sherman Firefly tanks at the corner of Carlos Calvo and Salta streets, in Buenos Aires. (Diario La Razón). Right, shots from Sherman tanks hit the building of the Constitución Palace Hotel downtown Buenos Aires. (Diario La Prensa)

their bathroom and that caused serious damage. Other buildings also suffered damage, especially those located on Lima Street, where the traces of shrapnel were notorious.

At 2:30 p.m., troops from Artillery Regiment Nr.1 and the Infantry Regiments Nr.1 and Nr.2 from Burzaco crossed the La Noria Bridge and entered the Federal Capital. They travelled several blocks along General Paz and when they reached Del Trabajo Avenue, they turned right to go directly to the avenue. The population saw the long column stop and deploy its 40mm anti-aircraft batteries, anti-tank guns and mortars while the sappers erected barricades and dug trenches. When the long column crossed the La Noria Bridge, a Morane-Saulnier MS.760 Paris for observation passed over it, indicating its position to the VII Air Brigade. Half an hour later, as the soldiers were setting up their pieces in the Park, a formation of 10 Gloster Meteors F.Mk.4 jets came from the west and swooped down on them to make low passes, scaring the neighbourhood with



Top, Gloster Meteor F.Mk.IV of the Argentine Air Force. (Marcelo Miranda).
Bottom, two pilot officers pose next to a Meteor armed with Matra T.10 rockets at the Morón Military Air Base. (Brigadier Major Hector Destri)

their turbines. Overwhelmed by panic, passers-by began to run towards the Marcelo T. de Alvear neighbourhood.

At 5:35 p.m., a private light plane made several passes over the square, throwing out pamphlets destined for the Colorado officers. These urged them to put down their attitude and join the Azul ranks in defence of institutions and legality:

- 1) Units that acted at the disposition of groups with political ambitions for power and who wish to establish the dictatorship in the country continue to join our forces.
- 2) If the personnel of that unit share our ideals of democracy and freedom for the Argentine people and of distancing the army from political activities, join our forces.
- 3) The forces that respond to the Argentine Army Command in Campo de Mayo will be received fraternally.

(signed)

General Juan Carlos Onganía, Commander of the legal forces.⁷

Several kilometres away, at 6:40 p.m., a second Air Force Sikorsky helicopter landed in front of the General Lemos School in Campo de Mayo. The helicopter remained on the platform with its rotors spinning noisily until Colonel Lanusse and other officers came out of the building and climbed aboard. Then it took off and left for Morón, where a meeting had been agreed with their commanders in order to finalise details for a joint action.

By then, the rebels had in their power the Cuyo Communications Centre at 257 Azcuénaga Street; in Jujuy, Mountain Detachment Nr.2 and Infantry Regiment Nr.28 were preparing to march on Salta; the Infantry Regiment Nr.17 from Catamarca was preparing to do the same in the direction of Tucumán and the same was happening with the troops from Entre Ríos, who were marching to Santa Fe to reinforce the defensive deployment.

In view of this, the river ferry service between the two provinces was interrupted and that of the military barges that linked Paraná and Colastine was interrupted as well. Private boats were seized, as well as others from the passenger service, and anti-aircraft guns and machine guns were located in the latter location.

The troops stationed in Parque Avellaneda were waiting for instructions when, at 4:55 p.m., they were flown over by the Gloster Meteor jets. The fighters made three low passes

and in the last one they opened fire, damaging some vehicles and buildings in the vicinity.

The troops on the ground took cover while the residents of the neighbouring houses threw themselves on the floor trying to avoid the shrapnel. A man from a corner signalled to the pilots, waving a white rag several times but apparently was not seen. The Meteors returned firing their guns and launching their Matra T.10 rockets, without hitting the targets. The projectiles fell in the park causing a violent noise and generating some fires, in addition to glass breakage and minor damage.

In Parque Chacabuco, the Sargento Cabral NCO School under the command of Colonel Rómulo Félix Menéndez, whose command had been installed in several buildings in the area, had been waiting since 03:30. His men waited in trenches or clung to machine gun nests as tanks and other vehicles remained nearby. Together with them, Palermo Regiments Nr.1 and Nr.2 and officers from the 12th police station were in combat positions. Two Air Force Meteor jets flew over the Chacabuco Park and 40 minutes later, 10 Glosters strafed the area and launched their Matra T.10 rockets.

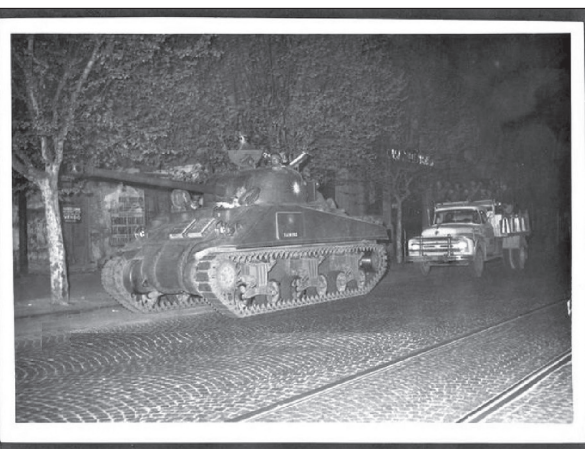
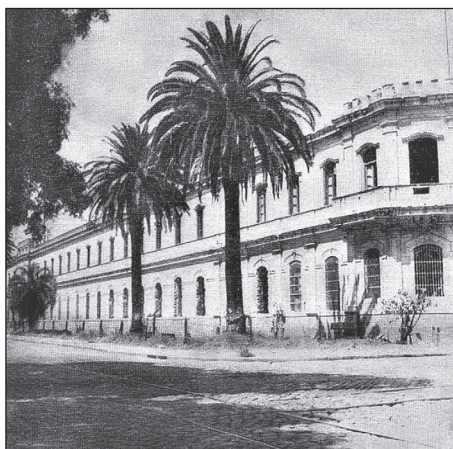
After the attack, Menéndez moved his command post to a private apartment located at 1349 Del Trabajo Avenue and ordered a series of moves designed to solidify the defences. Just at that moment, an observation Aero Commander aircraft was seen approaching and, passing over the roof of the building, received anti-aircraft fire. Finding himself the target of the attack, the pilot tried to dodge the shells and to do so he carried out a series of manoeuvres that made him lose stability. When everyone thought otherwise, the aircraft finally managed to stabilise and retreated to the west without being



Surroundings of Parque Chacabuco, in the city of Buenos Aires, where two Gloster Meteor jets of the Argentine Air Force attacked the effectives of the "Sergeant Cabral" NCO School. ① Place in front of the park where the command of the forces of the NCO School was installed. ② Site where a T10 rocket launched by Meteor jets fell. ③ Deployment of anti-aircraft batteries and machine guns on the roofs of buildings. As they retreated, the troops formed a column of trucks on Avenida del Trabajo to leave the area.



Left, script on the picture. Right, a civilian Aero Commander overflying the Chacabuco Park, which received AA fire. (Diario La Prensa)



Left, the Esteban di Luca Arsenal building in Buenos Aires. (Jorge Larroca). Right a Sherman Firefly tank moving down a street in Buenos Aires. (Ejército Argentino)

hit. At that precise moment, artillery fire was heard on Emilio Mitre Avenue, apparently against an advance patrol that was approaching, threateningly, from the east.

A few minutes later, the Air Force released the following statement:

The Commander-in-Chief of the Argentine Air Force and the Commander of Campo de Mayo summon Generals Juan Carlos Lorio, Bernardino Labayru and José Octavio Cornejo Saravia to immediately interrupt the actions, and present themselves as detainees in Campo de Mayo, to orders from Brigadier General Juan Carlos Onganía.⁸

At the Esteban de Luca Arsenal, located at the intersection of Brasil and Pozos streets, Sherman tanks from the C-10 Regiment under the command of Colonel Tomás Sánchez de Bustamante, fired at the guards and barricades that the defenders had erected in hours of the morning.

The armoured vehicles, located in Presidente Roque Sáenz Peña, concentrated their fire on the batteries, supported by Gloster Meteor fighter-bombers that made intimidating low flights and threatened to attack. Although some of the population had left the area, a good part of it refused to leave their homes for fear of the action of the looters who were already active in other parts of the city.

A shell fired by a Sherman killed one officer of the Arsenal

and seriously injured another, leaving the outside wall of the building covered in blood from the sidewalk up to five feet high. Another shell hit a trolleybus used as a barrier, leaving it engulfed in flames, while machine gun and automatic weapons' fire was responded to from inside the building. After half an hour the confrontation ended. From the tanks, located in Roque Sáenz Peña, a white flag could be seen waving at the entrance and a non-commissioned officer cautiously approaching with a cloth of the same colour, followed by two or three soldiers.

That afternoon, the Uruguayan Government offered to mediate the crisis. In an extraordinary session, the National Government Council, chaired by Faustino Harrison, met to analyse the situation and offer its intervention in order to avoid further bloodshed. It was a fraternal gesture that once again highlighted the River Plate brotherhood and the close ties that united both nations.

That night, at 10:45 p.m., troops from the National Gendarmerie showed up at the main access to Campo de Mayo with the evident purpose of joining the uprising. There were 120 soldiers under the command of two lieutenants, who arrived in two military trucks



Tucumán "Benjamín Matienzo" Airport which was occupied by effectives of Infantry Division Nr.5 on 21 September. (Public Domain)

transporting supplies and a MAN radio station.

22 September

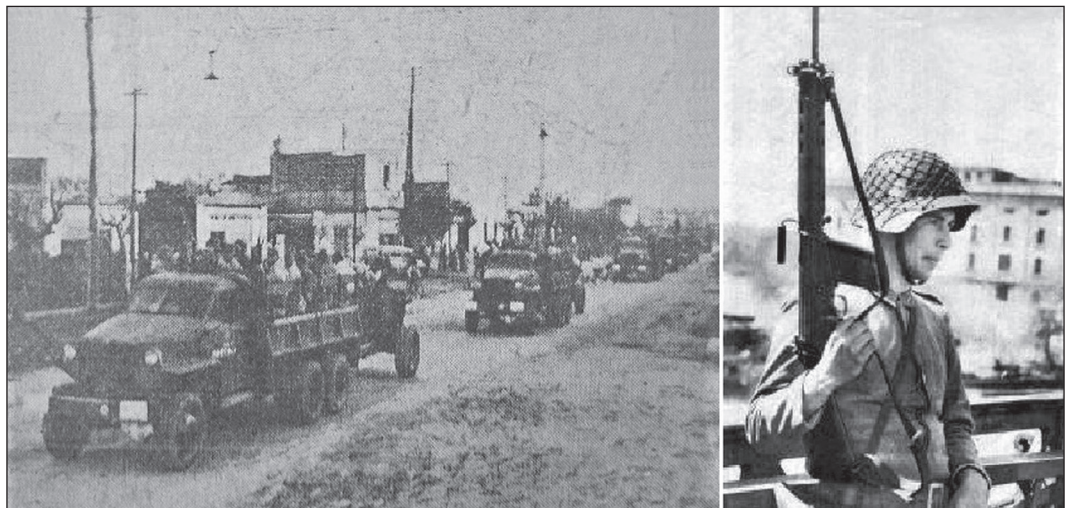
The commander of IV Army Corps in Salta had ordered that every motor vehicle requisitioned in the province be taken to the headquarters of the command, located on Sarmiento Avenue, and that retired officers had to present themselves as soon as possible to receive instructions.

Since noon on the 21st, members of Infantry Division Nr.5 occupied the Benjamín Matienzo Airport in Tucumán, especially guarding the hangars where the gasoline tanks were stored and where the aircraft of the Provincial Directorate of Aeronautics were kept.

In Mendoza, the military units commanded by colonels Fernando Enrique Cuartara and Gustavo Eppens agreed to keep their troops inside the barracks and avoid any type of confrontation, an initiative that was joined by the commander of the IV Air Brigade, Brigadier Carlos Conrado Segundo Armanini. Even so, the police were ordered into barracks, night patrols were organised and guards were established on the newsrooms of the newspapers, to prevent any attempted assault.

The Mobile Howitzer Regiment based in San Luis was preparing to move to Buenos Aires, complying with directives from the Commander of III Army Corps, General Aniceto Pérez. The unit consisted of 500 men and had 35 howitzers, a similar number of state-of-the-art guns and 65 military trucks.

By then, the Colorado troops who had fought in Parque Chacabuco were withdrawing to their cantonments, carefully



Left, Studebaker US6 trucks from the Campo de Mayo Garrison, carrying troops and artillery pieces. (Diario La Razón). Right, an Argentine Army soldier wearing a Swiss helmet and carrying a FN-FAL rifle. (Ejército Argentino)

watched by observation planes. These troops were Palermo Regiments Nr.1 and Nr.2 under the command of Colonels Carlos Caraba and Enrique Giménez, the Light Anti-Aircraft Artillery Group commanded by Colonel Abel González Álvarez and the Sargento Cabral NCO School, commanded by Colonel Rómulo F. Menéndez, who were following instructions from the Secretary of War and the National Executive Power.

At 3:00 p.m. on 22 September, Navy units waiting on the Recalada pontoon were ordered to weigh anchor and head out to the open sea, except for the aircraft carrier ARA *Independencia* and two cruisers that were taking part in Operation Unitas VII together with the squadrons of Uruguay, Brazil and the United States. The ships remained in the port of Montevideo awaiting instructions.

In the interior of the country, Azul officers took charge of several units while in Buenos Aires the resignations of the head of the Federal Police, Navy Captain Enrique Horacio Green and his deputy commander, Frigate Captain Miguel V. García, were known, as well

as those of the head and deputy head of Federal Coordination, frigate captain Ismael Mendioroz and Major Altemir. The news was communicated to Álvaro Alsogaray who immediately transmitted it to the Country's President.

From the province of Salta, meanwhile, came disturbing reports that gave an account of harsh clashes in the city of General Güemes and at the El Tala River. They were denied a few hours later, but they confirmed the tense situation in the northwest, with General Toranzo Montero threatening to start an advance at any moment. The territory was declared a "war zone" and for this purpose Lieutenant General (retired) Francisco Zerda was appointed military commander of the capital of Salta.

It was also made known that given the marked inferiority of conditions offered by the Salta garrison, air support had been requested from Campo de Mayo, which was expected by mid-afternoon that same day. The planes arrived when the sun was beginning to go down, two Avro Lincoln heavy bombers, two Douglas C-47 supply transports and four F-86F attack fighters that were limited to only flying over the city and making warning passes over the Colorado troops.

Around noon, General Rauch held meetings with his staff officers and then told the media that forces from Misiones were heading to the scene in two transport aircraft.

On that day, the Air Force released a statement announcing that it was joining the Azul Command "...Until the last consequences..."⁹ The Colorados now depended on the Navy to take a similar step in their support, but the latter did not and the die was cast for the Colorado side.

With the balance of forces tilted in their favour, the Azul troops attacked the Colorado positions in Plaza Constitución, in the Fray Luis Beltrán Army Mechanics School (located where the Garrahan Hospital is today), through brief skirmishes without casualties, until the surrender in Chacabuco Park of the last unit deployed in the Non-commissioned Officers School under the command of Rómulo Menéndez, who handed over the post after Air Force planes fired warning rockets.

Where there were confrontations was in the province of Santa Fe, more precisely in the vicinity of Rosario, when the outposts of the Infantry Division Nr.3 approached the Molino Blanco through Ayacucho Avenue. At that point, Infantry Regiment Nr.11, (IR11) whose mission was to cover Infantry General Arenales Nr.12 (IR12), was camped on the banks of the Saladillo stream, in the Roque Sáenz Peña neighbourhood. Both forces responded to Campo de Mayo and were prepared to resist any approach attempt. Because of this, when the advance guards of the Division Nr.3 ran into their guard posts, a fierce confrontation ensued in which two corporals were killed and several troops were wounded. At 12:00, after establishing a truce, Colonels Ortiz, from the Colorado side, and Mario Fonseca from the Azul side, agreed to a meeting at the Infantry Regiment Nr.11 offices, to which the dejected non-commissioned officers belonged. In the presence of their equals in rank, Castro Feijóo and Carlos



Left, President of the Argentine Republic José María Guido.
Right, Lieutenant General Juan Carlos Onganía, new Commander-in-Chief of the Argentine Army appointed by Guido. (Public domain)

Díaz Moreno of the IR12, they ordered a ceasefire and after an hour and a half of deliberation, they agreed to withdraw Regiments Nr.11 & Nr.12 to their cantonments and the Division Nr.3 to the other side of the Carcarañá River, near Oliveros.

On that day, President Guido took a bold decision by naming himself interim Army Secretary and ordered the removal of Generals Lorio and Labayru from their posts. He also appealed to all Army units to cease operations and return to their barracks. When both Lorio and Labayru defied his orders, President Guido began to treat the Colorados as the rebels and the Azules as his loyal supporters. This caused resignations in the President's cabinet, including the Defence Minister Lanús, the Interior Minister Adrogué, and the Navy Secretary Clement.

Faced with such an overall picture of the situation, at nightfall, General Toranzo Montero ordered the withdrawal of his forces and at 8 a.m. the next day the state of war was lifted, rendering all preventive measures null and void.

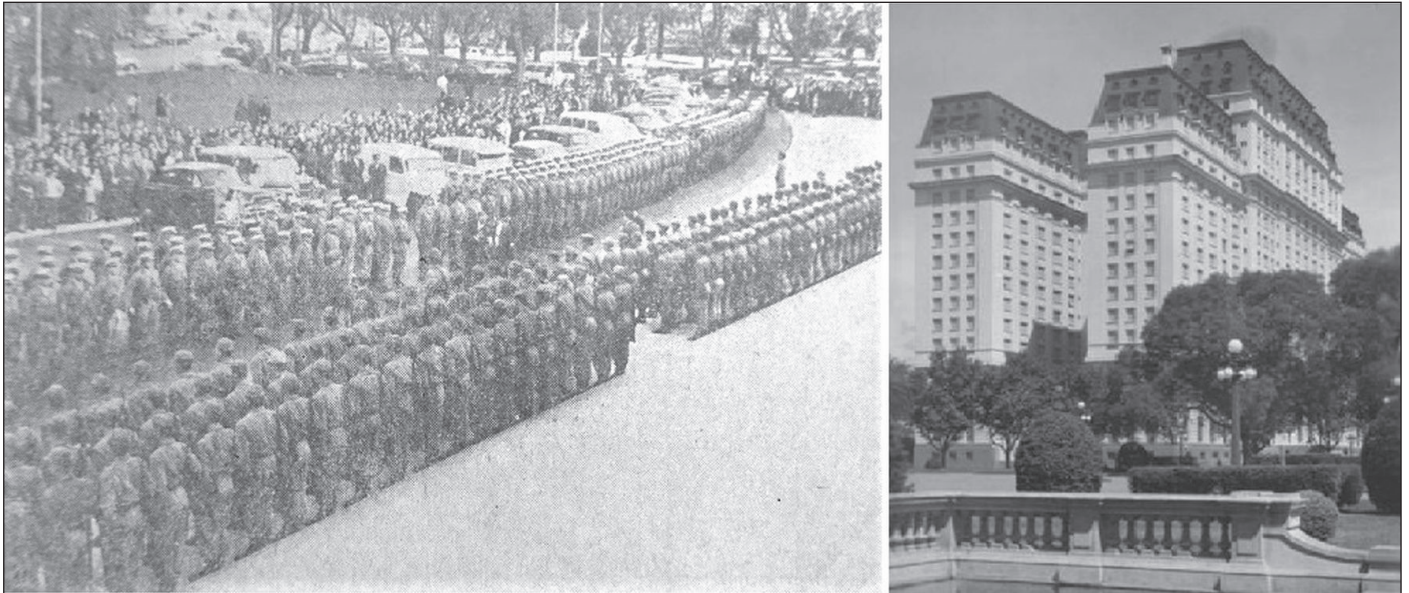
At nightfall and with the situation completely under control, General Onganía went to the Secretary of War building, where the Colorado command was based, and this was surrendered by General Martijena. At 8:30 p.m., a statement from President Guido reported that the confrontation had ended and that General Onganía was the new Commander-in-Chief of the Army.

23 September

At noon that day, the famous Communiqué Nr.150 was released, written by Mariano Grondona, a proclamation from the "Azul sector" about the attitude to be taken in respect of the return to constitutionality, which was taken at the time as a kind of 'Azul Creed'.

Our objective at the national level is to maintain the current Executive Power and ensure it the sufficient and necessary freedom of action, to the extent that its mission is conducive to the fulfilment of the commitments contracted with the people of the Nation, in order to materialise in the shortest term of the validity of the Constitution.

In the military, the reestablishment of justice, the basis of discipline, respect for laws and regulations, without discrimination in their application, is pursued. We believe, first of all, that the country must return as soon as possible to the full rule of the Constitution that our elders bequeathed to us. In it and only in it will all Argentines find the bases of internal peace, of national



Left, changing the guard in front of the Secretary of War on the afternoon of 23 September. In the foreground, the armoured troops of Campo de Mayo, which until then had custody of the building. Facing them, the Infantry Battalion of the Military School that replaced them. (Diario La Prensa) Right, the Libertador Building, Headquarters of the Army Command and the Secretary of War. (Public domain)

unity and prosperity, which have been seriously compromised by those who have shown that they have no other reason than force, nor any other goal than the assault of power. We maintain that the guiding principle of constitutional life is the sovereignty of the people. Only the popular will can give legitimate authority to the government and majesty to the presidential investiture.

We promote, therefore, the holding of elections through a proportional system that ensures participation in national life for all sectors; that prevents any of them from obtaining, through electoral methods that do not respond to the reality of the country, the artificial monopoly of political life; that demands organisation and democratic principles from all the parties and that ensures the impossibility of returning to eras already surpassed; that they do not put on the sidelines of the political solution authentic Argentine sectors that, mistakenly and biased directed at some time, can be honestly incorporated into constitutional life today.

On this basis of harmony, it must be achieved among all Argentines, who only wish to work in peace for the greatness of the Nation and for their own well-being. We believe that the Armed Forces should not govern. They must, on the contrary, be subject to civil power. This does not mean that they should not gravitate in institutional life. Their role is, at the same time, silent and fundamental: they guarantee the institutional pact that our predecessors bequeathed us and have the sacred duty to prevent and contain any totalitarian enterprise that arises in the country, whether from the government or from the opposition.

May the Argentine people live democracy freely and peacefully, for the Army will be constituted, as of today, in support of their rights and custodian of their liberties. We are absolutely convinced that there will be no economic or social solution to the serious problems that afflict us without political stability and internal peace. The Armed Forces must take their share of responsibility in the chaos that the Republic is experiencing and straighten the course of events towards the immediate reestablishment of these values.

Once this urgent task has been completed, they can and must return to their specific functions with the certainty of having fulfilled a duty and having paid a debt. We trust in civil power. We believe in our people. We leave the solution of Argentine

problems to their representatives. As men-at-arms, we fulfil the sacred mission of making democracy possible, through the offering of our lives.

That the Argentine people, without distinction of class or partisanship and owner of great intuitions, know how to follow us in this fight, which is theirs. Let us therefore raise the flags that will give this land peace, progress and a vocation for greatness: the rule of the Constitution, the effective validity of democracy and the definitive reconciliation among Argentines.¹⁰

In the afternoon of 23 September, the situation began to normalise. After a day of hectic negotiations, President Guido spoke on the Radio and Television Network to announce that a solution had been found and that elections would be called shortly. He did so from the studios of TV Channel 7, accompanied by several members of his cabinet, among whom the Minister of Education and Justice in interim charge of defence, Dr Miguel Ángel Susini Jr, and the Minister of Economy, Eng. Álvaro Alsogaray, stand out. As has been said several times, he momentarily held the portfolio of the Interior. That calmed things down and the troops returned to barracks.

Shortly before the message went on the air, radio and television programming was interrupted to make way for a new statement from Campo de Mayo in which the population was informed about the events that had kept citizens on edge in recent days. The message emphasised the need to return to constitutional rule, guarantee the continuation of the current government and assure it the necessary freedom of action, as well as the reestablishment of discipline and military justice, peace and the urgent call for elections.

General Onganía's appointment as Commander-in-Chief of the Army seemed to make things clear – the Azul side had triumphed. After receiving General Osiris Villegas in Campo de Mayo at 4:10 p.m., the new chief moved his command to the 5th floor of the Libertador Building, where the Secretary of War worked, and from there he began to supervise the withdrawal of the troops.

Meanwhile, at Government House everything was back to normal. The soldiers stationed at the entrances and windows of the building were withdrawn and the troops who were waiting in the corridors and interior patios returned to the grenadier detachment, located on the ground floor.

Those who remained at their posts were the soldiers who were on Paseo Colón Avenue, those on the esplanade of Rivadavia Street and those who stood guard at 25 de Mayo and Balcarce streets.

It was late afternoon when the troops from the Airborne School started back by train. They travelled all night and once in Córdoba they were received by relatives, friends and representatives of the active forces, including the political groups that had gathered at the railway station. The crowds watched them boarding the trucks that were to take them to the La Calera barracks, and greeted them as they passed.

In Rosario, the military forces began to disperse starting at 6:10 a.m. In Mendoza, Colorado chiefs and officers were arrested, while at the naval bases of Puerto Belgrano and Comandante Espora, the situation returned to normal, the same happened in Punta Indio, Mar del Plata, Río Gallegos and Ushuaia.

One of the keys to the Azul victory was the psychological action carried out by their commanders through the radio. The brain behind this operation was the sociologist José Enrique Miguens, a well-known Catholic lawyer and thinker whom the insurgent military had urgently summoned to work on their communiqués, slogans and contents.

4

INTERMEZZO (SEPTEMBER 1962 – APRIL 1963)

After the victory in the September clashes, the Azul side, concentrated in the Army Cavalry, and in alliance with President Guido, sought to reflect that victory in the strategic positions of the Government and the Army, displacing from the posts those who had belonged to, or sympathised with, the Colorado side and the Navy.

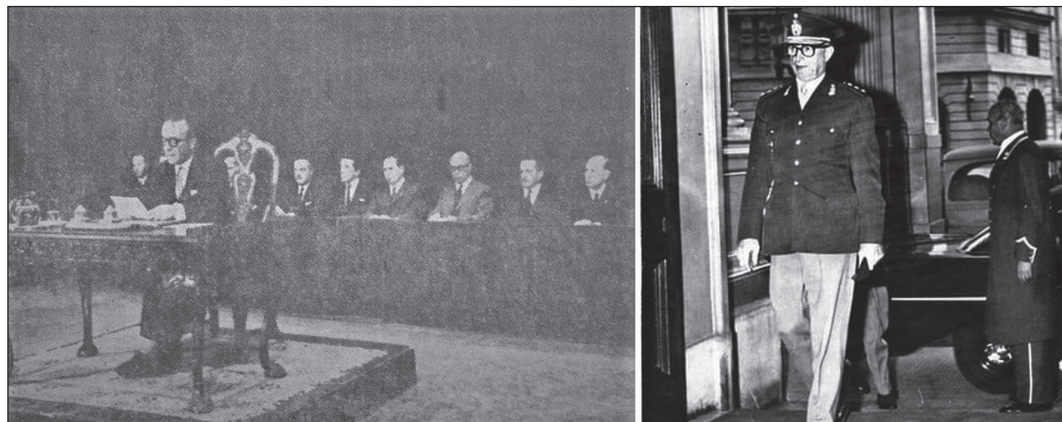
Guido, not without difficulty, reorganised his cabinet. The key post was Secretary of War, to which he appointed General Benjamín Rattenbach, a highly reputed military man who would turn out to be the most influential figure in the cabinet, but who would have to

deal with the insubordination of General Onganía (Commander-in-Chief of the Army), who wanted an Army completely autonomous of political power, and who emerged from the September clashes as the main political figure in the country, supposing him capable of making the population forget his sympathies for Perón and Frondizi, a historical phenomenon which has been called 'the myth of Onganía'.

Additionally, Guido reappointed Rodolfo Martínez as Minister of the Interior, also a former Frondizi minister, architect of an

electoral solution through a "national front" that included the three great political forces that existed in the country at that time (Peronists, Frondizist radicals and Balbinist radicals), proposing a military man as a common candidate, for which Onganía began to displace Aramburu. Mariano Grondona took over as Martínez's Under-Secretary. Guido appointed a new Minister of Defence, José Manuel Astigueta, and also new Secretaries of the Navy, Admiral Carlos Alberto Kolungia, and of the Air Force, Brigadier Juan Carlos Pereira.

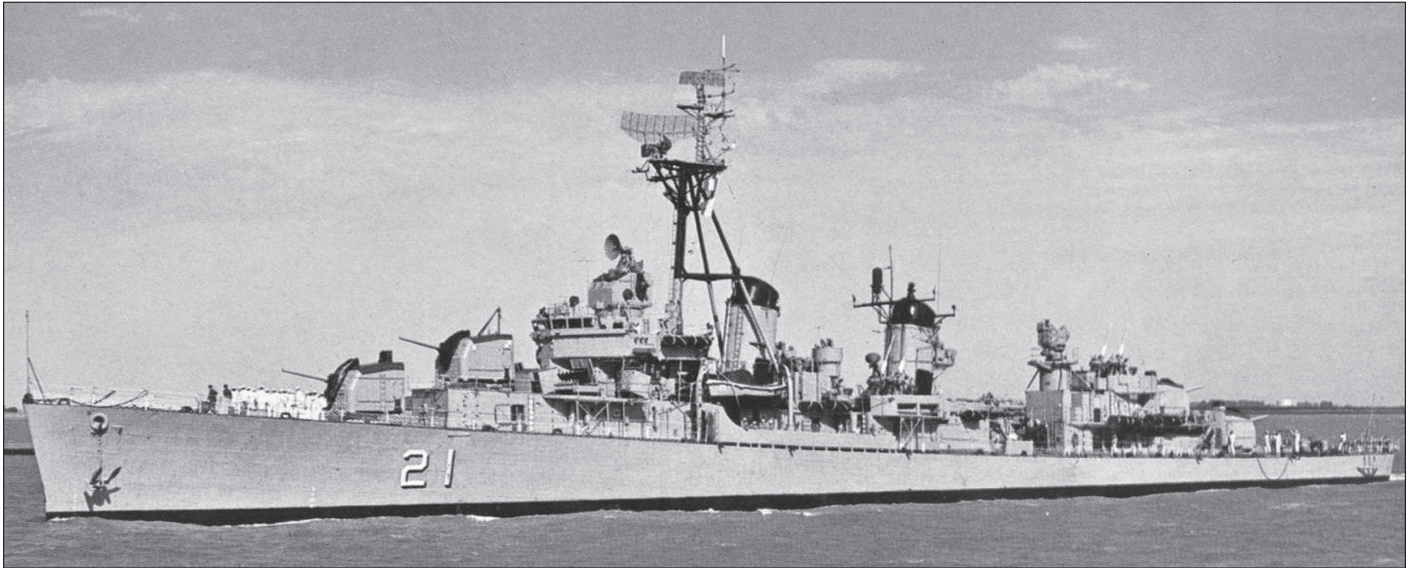
On 23 October, Foreign Minister Muñiz announced that Argentina had aligned with the United States in blockading Cuba and that it would send a military force to participate in the action. The Argentine Navy Destroyers D-21 ARA *Espera* and D-22 ARA *Rosales* sailed to the Caribbean under the command of Admiral Constantino Arguelles on 27 and 28 October, followed by Army and Air Force units



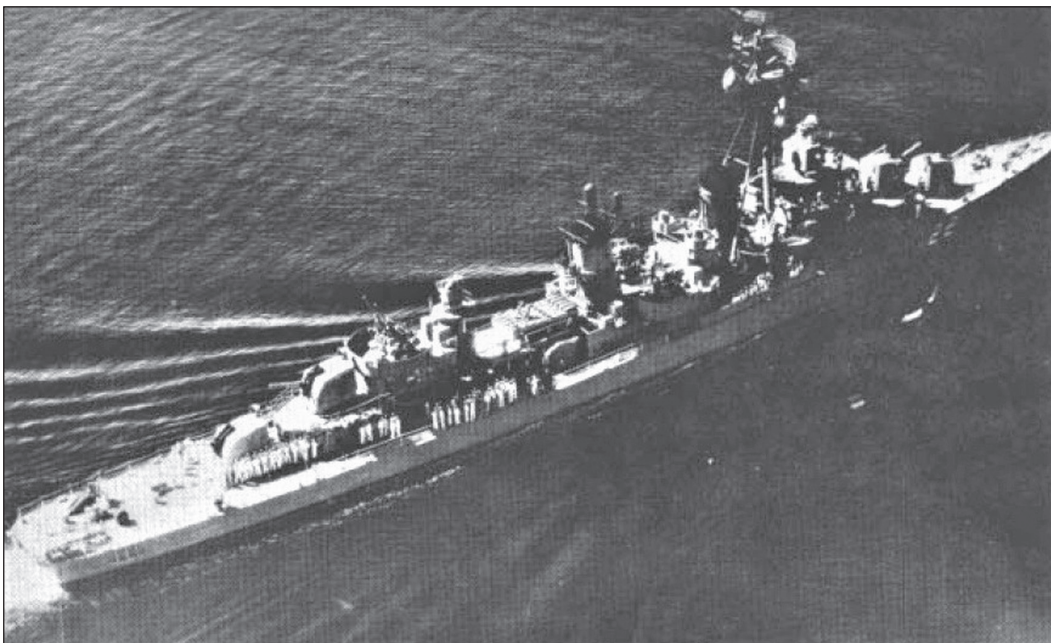
Left, President Guido announces the cessation of hostilities on the national network, with members of his cabinet seated behind him. (Diario La Nación). Right, the new Secretary of War, General Benjamín Rattenbach. (Public domain)



Left, Rear Admiral Gastón C. Clemente reads the farewell note as Secretary of the Navy. Behind him, in civilian clothes, his replacement and equal in rank, Carlos A. Kolungia, and at the centre, the commander of Naval Operations, Rear Admiral Agustín R. Penas. Right, press conference at the Morón VII Air Brigade with Brigadier Cayo Alsina (right, with glasses), Lieutenant General Onganía (centre) and Brigadier Gilberto Ilario Oliva (left). (Diario La Prensa)



The Argentine Navy Destroyer D-21 ARA *Espora* (Fletcher class, ex DD-670 USS *Dortch*) (Histarmar Archives)



The Argentine Navy Destroyer D-22 ARA *Rosales* (Fletcher class, ex DD-644 USS *Stembel*) (U.S. Department of Defence)

officers were not sanctioned but hundreds were abruptly transferred in order to prevent those less committed to the Azul side from being near the Federal Capital. There were new divisional and regimental commanders appointed to most Army units. In the Navy, there were no large purges since it had not actively participated in the military operations during September, but the Secretary of the Navy Rear Admiral Kolungia tried to shake up the command structure. He replaced the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Penas, with Admiral Leandro Maloberti. Kolungia also tried to persuade Navy Captains

that would operate from Naval Air Bases in Florida and Trinidad and Tobago.

The Azul victory strengthened Guido considerably, as well as his exclusive objective of holding presidential elections in the shortest possible time, with some participation from Peronism, in order to return to constitutional rule. But, at the same time, Onganía was carrying out his own agenda which put as a first place objective the continuation of the confrontation between Azules and Colorados, now extending it to the 'fight' against the Navy, which was mostly Colorado, in order to recover the hegemony of the Army, that had been lost after the *Revolucion Libertadora* of 1955.

Generals Rattenbach and Onganía carried out an immense purge in the Army. Federico Toranzo Montero was arrested along with 12 Colorado generals, including Lorio, Labayrú, Martijena, Túrolo, Cornejo Saravia, Bonnacarrere and Elisondo; Field Officers (colonels and majors) were also arrested in Campo de Mayo and another 52 in different garrisons. The result of this review process was the compulsory retirement of 155 officers, including 17 generals, 42 colonels, 64 lieutenant colonels and 32 majors. Junior

Rivolta, Molinari and Noriega to voluntarily request retirement, which they refused, in addition Kolungia refused to promote certain Azul officers to ship commands. All this caused conflict with the Council of Admirals.

On 4 December, several ministers and secretaries resigned, including Engineer Alsogaray and Rear Admiral Kolungia, and in response to this, Secretary of War General Benjamín Rattenbach reported that the Army was willing to enforce Communiqué Nr.150 of Campo de Mayo and would not tolerate any attempt to impose a totalitarian regime. The following day, Vice Admiral (Ret.) Carlos A. Garzoni was appointed Secretary of the Navy and on 11th, the President relieved Brigadier Cayo Alsina, Commander-in-Chief of the Air Force, and the Combat Commander Brigadier Oliva, appointing his counterpart Carlos Conrado Armanini in his place. A tense situation arose when Alsina refused to abide by the order and rebelled, establishing a parallel command in Córdoba. The new Commander then sent F-86F and Meteor fighters from three different bases to overfly the Córdoba air base to demonstrate that he was in control of the force. Finally, things calmed down when,



After the events of September 1962, Brigadier General Carlos Segundo Conrado Armanini was appointed Commander of the Air Force. (Dirección de Estudios Históricos de la Fuerza Aérea Argentina)

36 hours later, Alsina relinquished his position and was put under arrest. In the case of the Air Force, there was not a conflict reflecting the Azul-Colorado rivalry but there were tensions over personalities and management style.

A tense climate was noticeable in the corridors and military facilities, and as time passed, everything seemed to indicate that the military crisis had *not* been resolved.

There were no firm indications as to whether the new military chiefs accepted the election date announced for October 1963 by President Guido or whether they would try to bring the date forward. There were still influential civil and military leaders in Argentina who feared that early elections would reinstate the Peronist majority in Congress that had led to the military annulling the elections the previous March and deposing Frondizi. Others saw in that an incentive to unite the democratic parties that even in March could have achieved a majority if they had not been so divided into numerous factions.

In the months that followed the end of the crisis, the victors devoted themselves to the difficult task of re-establishing discipline and military justice. There was, however, one fact that hardly anyone seemed to notice. The iron arm of General Onganía had not reached the Navy, the historical bastion of anti-Peronism since the bloody events of 1955.

Complying with the agreements, on 14 January 1963 Guido officially announced that on 23 June of that year the general elections to elect national, provincial and municipal authorities would be held.

On 3 March, former President Frondizi was transferred from Martín García Island to San Carlos de Bariloche, where he remained at the disposal of the Executive Power, pending a resolution. Some days later, the Unión Cívica Radical del Pueblo (UCRP) selected the Córdoba physician Dr Arturo Illia as its presidential nominee and Dr Carlos Perette, a lawyer from Entre Ríos, as his running mate. On 19 March, the Unión Popular Party was legalised and that would be an acceptable Peronist political vehicle for the elections.

The key factor in what was to happen in the following months was the decision adopted by the Presidency to consider the 'regime that existed until September 1955 morally disqualified and legally excluded, definitively, from any possible participation in the political



The presidential nominee of the UCRP Party Dr Arturo Illia, a physician from Córdoba, at right, and, at left, the Vice Presidential candidate, Dr Carlos Perette, a lawyer from Entre Ríos. (Public Domain)



Some of the Colorado conspirators began preparing for a 'second round' in November 1962. From left to right, the elderly retired General Benjamín Menéndez, retired General Toranzo Montero and retired Admiral Isaac Rojas. (Archivo General de la Nación)

and in public life, both at the national level and at the provincial and municipal levels'.¹ The day after the announcement, Dr Horacio García Belsunce submitted his resignation to the Ministry of Finance. On 30 March Belsunce was replaced by Dr Ramón C. Lequerica and five days later the head of the Interior, Dr Rodolfo Martínez Jr, who had been in office since the end of the September crisis, resigned. In this climate of resignations and appointments, rumours of a new uprising began to take shape.

Guido, however, tried to advance towards the electoral solution, albeit with difficulties, because the plan to achieve the Argentine Great National Agreement (GANA), promoted by former Minister Martínez and Under-Secretary Grondona, encountered innumerable difficulties in the face of the possibility of a new Peronist victory. Towards the end of November 1962, with the liberation of Colorado

leaders, Toranzo Montero and Armando Martijena, a new coup conspiracy began, this time incorporating the leader of the first and failed coup against Perón in 1951, General Benjamín Menéndez, and the leader of the group, the toughest member of the *Revolucion Libertadora* of 1955, Admiral Isaac Rojas. Retired Rear Admirals Arturo Rial and Carlos Sánchez Sañudo joined the conspirators, as well as Navy Captain Antonio Rivolta, leader of the Scottish Rite Masonic order, with influential contacts with the Anglo-Argentine business community, and then Commodore Osvaldo Lentino, in charge of the rebellious Air Force.

The ever-present threat of a dictatorial regime loomed over Argentina and many military chiefs seemed to lean towards it, not content with the roles that fell to them. The Navy had made its position clear when, at the end of the crisis, it blamed President Guido for the confrontations and the fighting between the forces. He was blamed for not having prevented the loss of life, for the material damage and for leading the country into disagreement and division. Disagreements that arose in December within the Air Force, prompted the Colorado chiefs to organise clandestine meetings to analyse the situation and establish the course to follow. The decision was unanimous: it was necessary to contact General Benjamín Menéndez and agree on a meeting in the last week of March. It was held at the home of the emblematic military leader and was attended by General Federico Toranzo Montero, Brigadier Osvaldo Raúl Lentino, Admiral Arturo Rial and Rear Admiral

Carlos Sánchez Sañudo; they verbally agreed to remove Guido and form a government headed by Menéndez himself, and who would be supported by a military junta. On 24 March 1963, the planning of the coup was complete and its leaders signed an *Acta de Constancia* (Certificate of Constancy), detailing with both the operations necessary to seize power, install a Military Junta and suppress those who opposed it, as well as the 'Doctrine of Government' setting out an intention to carry out actions such as the 'liberalization of the economy and the weakening of the labour movement.' The *Acta de Constancia* named the 79-year-old General Benjamín Menéndez as 'Chief of the Revolution and President of the Nation.'

On 29 March they met again and set 2 April as the deadline for the start of hostilities. On 1 April, at 7:30 p.m., a new conclave was held to confirm what had been agreed upon and numerous contacts were established in order to start the revolution.

The government had attempted a Solomonic solution by calling general elections and at the same time keeping Peronism outlawed, but that did not seem to be enough for the most recalcitrant sectors. The memories of Frondizismo were fresh and there was a fear of losing the power that the military had achieved in 1955. It was imperative to stop the Electoral Act and keep things on standby for the next five years, but the Azul sector, that is, the winning side in September, was not willing to allow it.

Once again, as in 1962, war clouds loomed on the horizon.

5

MILITARY UPRISING, SECOND ACT (APRIL 1963)

2 April

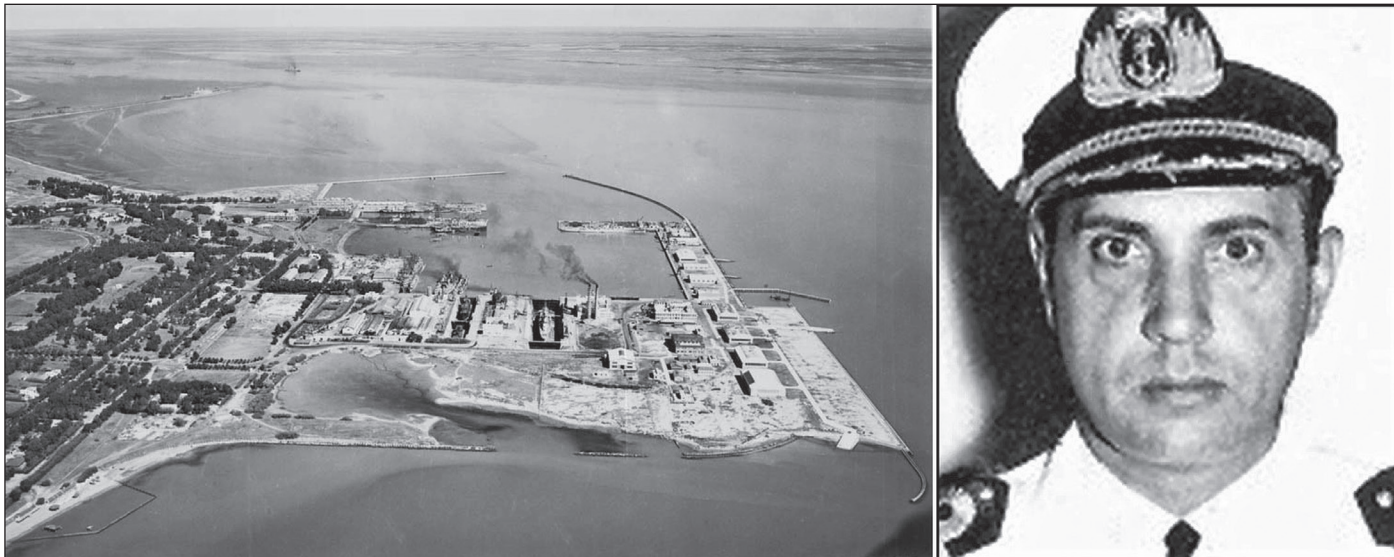
At dawn on 2 April 1963, the uprising began. Practically the entire Navy joined it, as did a large sector of the Army, although it had almost no support in the Air Force. In the naval force, the Navy Mechanics School, the Río Santiago, Mar del Plata and Puerto Belgrano naval bases rose up, the latter under the command of Rear Admiral Jorge Julio Palma, and also the Marine Infantry Command, the Punta Indio and Puerto Belgrano naval air bases, and even the Naval Operations Command-in-Chief, in which building the Colorado command was installed, joined the rising. The Sea Fleet, which was on operations under the command of Admiral Eladio Vázquez, maintained an ambiguous attitude until the end, when he pronounced himself "loyal" to the Guido Government.

During the morning, the troops of the Navy Mechanics School and of Marine Infantry Regiments Nr.1 and Nr.2 marched towards the Secretary of the Navy and placed themselves under the orders of the Commander of the Marine Infantry, Admiral Guillermo Pérez Pitón, and occupied the North Dock of the Port of Buenos Aires and some key positions in the downtown area of the city.

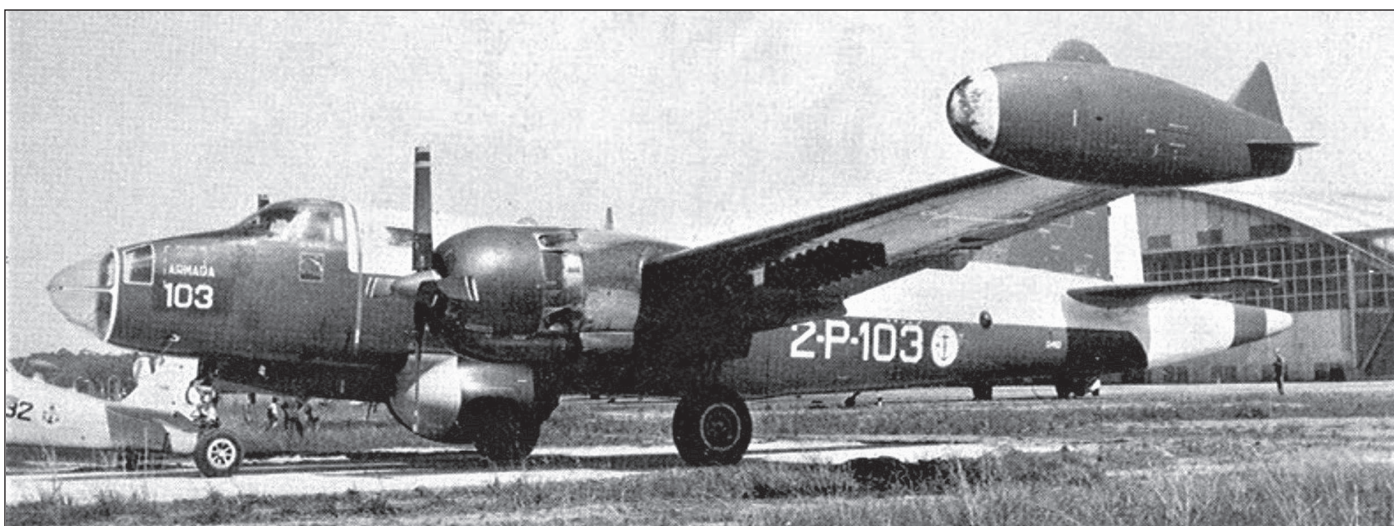
A large part of the Army rose in revolt despite the purge of the previous year, although due to the transfers they were units far from the Federal Capital, such as the Airborne Troops School in Córdoba, the Anti-Aircraft Artillery School in Camet near Mar del Plata, Regiment Nr.2 of the Mountain Artillery in Jujuy, the Bariloche Mountain Engineers Battalion Nr.6, part of the Mountain Infantry Regiment Nr.26 from Junín de los Andes and the Motorised Infantry



A Naval Aviation North American T-6 Texan (left) and a Beechcraft AT-11 Kansan of the Second General Purpose Squadron. (Histarmar Archives)



On the left, aerial view of the Puerto Belgrano Naval Base. (Histarmar Archives). On the right, Rear Admiral Jorge Julio Palma, commander of Puerto Belgrano. (Diario La Nación).



The Naval Aviation Lockheed P-2E Neptune serial 0410/2-P-0103 at Comandante Espora Naval Air Base in the early 1960s. (Aviación Naval Argentina)

Regiment Nr.24, together with the Battalion of Motorised Engineers Nr.9, both from Río Gallegos.

The Air Force remained, for the most part, loyal to Guido, although the Aeroparque in the Federal Capital, Mar del Plata, and Reconquista bases all rebelled. At the Jorge Newbery Metropolitan Airport in downtown Buenos Aires, Air Force cadres led by Vice Commodore Luis Alfredo Berruel, arrested their commander, Commodore Marcelo Puig, together with his second in command, Vice Commodore Rafael Sáenz and, on behalf of Commodore Osvaldo Raúl Lentino, seized the air station proclaiming themselves supporters of the revolution. The government soon understood that a new rebellion was on the horizon and that it would be much more violent than the one in the previous year.

From the early hours of that day, the Naval Aviation carried out several reconnaissance flights with some AT-6 Texans and AT-11 Kansans of the Second General Purpose Squadron, confirming the concentration of troops from the Azul side awaiting orders to advance on Punta Indio Naval Air Base. To counteract this situation, a series of air raids were planned that included a night bombing of the facilities of the C-8 Tank Cavalry Regiment General Necochea in Magdalena with Lockheed P-2E Neptune aircraft. Two Neptunes, serials 0410/2-P-103 and 0412/2-P-105, from Comandante Espora Naval Air Base, were each prepared with 226 kilo AN M64A1 bombs

for a horizontal night bombing of the aforementioned facilities. Once they reached the objective, they dropped their bombs causing significant damage to the barracks buildings, also destroying several trucks and Sherman tanks. Both Neptunes landed at the Punta Indio base. Another bombing action was then planned, this time targeting the Campo de Mayo area and also the Air Force installations in El Palomar, escorted by Grumman F9F Panther fighters, but there was a change in plans when the advance of mechanised troops was confirmed towards Magdalena.

Before dawn, a large concentration of tanks from the C-8 Regiment was detected inside a wooded area, from where they were carrying out anti-aircraft fire. The two Punta Indio Neptunes took off and fired 4-inch AF3 rockets at that target. While the Air Force attack on Punta Indio (described below) was taking place, a section of F-86F Sabre fighters tried to intercept one of the Neptunes, serial 0412/2-P-105, but it entered a cloud bank over the Río de la Plata, eluding them. It then flew at a very low altitude following the coastline to Bahía Blanca, landing at the Comandante Espora Base. The crew of the other Neptune, serial 0410/2-P-103, in the presence of Air Force fighters, decided to head for Uruguay, landing at Carrasco International Airport, near Montevideo.

At 6:30 am, a group of Colorado officers from the Naval Information Service (SIN) tried to assassinate General Osiris



Left, Rear Admirals Arturo Rial (left) and Adolfo Estévez (right) in the late 1950s. Right, the facilities of the Navy Mechanics School (ESMA). (Public domain)



General Osiris Villegas, who suffered an attack on 2 April 1963, but survived. (Public domain)

Villegas, one of the Azul leaders, as he was leaving his home in Bella Vista to go to Campo de Mayo, wounding him in the neck but without serious consequences. Simultaneously, another commando took over Radio Argentina in Lomas de Zamora and proceeded to broadcast the first Colorado communiqué, signed by General Benjamín Menéndez:

No more corruption; restore moral and civic decency; integral freedom of man; punishment of the merchants as an example for the next generations. National Revolution that only criminals and businessmen from above and below should fear; social progress, equitable distribution of wealth; reestablishment of the principle

of government authority without distinctions of political background; reconciliation of all citizens; sovereign country master of its destiny without vengeance or revenge¹

At 9:00 am, Rear Admiral Arturo Rial took command of the Navy Mechanics School (ESMA) and without wasting time ordered its mobilisation. The members of the unit began the preparations while the motorised group started up their trucks and requisitioned vehicles to transport the troops. More than 20 transports were lined up on the ESMA patios and, following the orders given by the non-commissioned officers, the marines began to board, carrying full combat gear.

A statement issued by the rebel General Staff reported at 09:37 that troops from Puerto Belgrano were marching towards Bahía Blanca with the intention of occupying its urban area and that the Navy was sailing towards Buenos Aires. Once the news was known, Casa Rosada reinforced its security and ordered the same to be done at other dependencies, deploying armed guards at strategic points. As in 1955, the naval marines took up positions in front of Plaza de Mayo and prepared to attack as soon as they received the order.

At 10:56 am, a radio in the hands of the rebels reported that Menéndez had assumed the Presidency of the Nation. By then, the Colorado troops completely controlled the city of La Plata and the Marine Corps had taken up positions in front of Plaza de Mayo ready to attack the Casa Rosada.

In Bahía Blanca, troops from Nr.5 Army Division under the command of General Eduardo Luchessi maintained control of the situation and guarded the access routes in anticipation of a possible approach from Puerto Belgrano. The naval base, for its part, established a defensive perimeter around its facilities, placing 40mm cannons both in the vicinity and on the crossroads and



Left, marines in a jeep during a parade in the early 1960s. (Armada Argentina) Right, the Government House called Casa Rosada. (Public domain)



Left, marines with a 75mm M20 recoilless cannon.
Right, marines with a double naval mounting Bofors 40mm L.60 emplaced around the Naval Air Base Comandante Espora. (Armada Argentina)



Left, Captain Carlos Carlos Alberto De Blasis. Right, four Argentine Air Force CB-1 North American F-86F Sabre fighters overflying the Andes in the early 1960s. (Dirección de Estudios Históricos de la Fuerza Aérea Argentina)

roads that led to the city and neighbouring Punta Alta. Around noon the first confrontation took place in the area of Bahía Blanca. Marine Infantry troops, who had just occupied Punta Alta, with the support of the Naval Aviation, clashed with the Infantry Regiment Nr.5 (RI5). The attack on RI5 was carried out from two directions, the first from the front, where a naval column attacked vigorously, and the second from behind, from the road that led to Punta Alta. Trying not to get caught up in the vice, the Army troops moved out into the open field, dug trenches and constructed machine gun nests on a nearby rise. Minutes later the Naval Aviation appeared, carrying out intimidating flights. The army troops opened fire with their machine guns, not only against the aircraft but also against the marines who were approaching from Aldea Romana. The Naval troops prevailed in little more than half an hour, wounding several soldiers. General Luchessi, his Chief of Staff, Colonel Alfredo Serrés, his deputy, Colonel Leandro Anaya and Lieutenant Colonel Benigno Sánchez, commander of RI5 were all taken prisoner and taken to Puerto Belgrano,

At the same time, Navy ships that were carrying out exercises in Golfo Nuevo were returning at full speed to port, responding to directives from the high command. Similar preparations were being

made at the Comandante Espora Naval Air Base at the same time that members of the Marine Corps proceeded to occupy the LU2, LU3 and LU7 radio stations in Bahía Blanca.

At 11:55 am one of those stations announced, on 8550 kHz, under the name *La Voz de la Libertad* (The Voice of Freedom), that Puerto Belgrano was responding to the rebel command and that marines had just occupied Punta Alta and had surrounded Infantry Regiment Nr.5 (RI5), with whom an exchange of fire had taken place.

The Argentine Air Force ordered the implementation of the CONINTES plan that provided for the quartering of 100 percent of the personnel, and the enlistment of the material and the crews to deploy and operate at the order of the command. At 6:20 pm, four North American F-86F Sabre fighters of the CB-1, serials C-101, C-108, C-111 and C-128, commanded by Captain Carlos De Blasis, took off for Morón. At 7:30 p.m., three Air Force gunsmith NCOs arrived there on board a Morane-Saulnier MS-760 from IV Air Brigade, in order to assist in the enlistment of a mixed section of fighter-bombers from Groups 2 & 3. At 10 pm, the logistics support staff arrived in the unit's Douglas C-47 serial TC-35.



Morane-Saulnier M.S.760 Paris advanced training and attack jets of IV Air Brigade of the Argentine Air Force in Mendoza in the 1960s. (Dr Atilio Marino collection)



The Douglas C-47 serial TC-35 of the Argentine Air Force that transported the logistical support for the operations of the F-86F Sabre fighters in Morón on 2 April 1963. (Cicales-Raczynski collection)



Left, the Naval Air Base of Punta Indio. (Public domain). Right, North American T-6 Texan of Naval Aviation. (Raczynski collection)

Attack on the Magdalena C-8 Tank Regiment

In the morning of 2 April, the Naval Air Base of Punta Indio, base of the Fighter and Attack Squadron Nr.1, was the scene of feverish activity. At the northeast end of runway No.1, a dozen North American AT-6 Texans were lined up with full tanks and fully armed. Except for the weather, the scene seemed to go back to June

1955, when the planes that bombed Buenos Aires departed from that same place in order to attempt to kill Perón.

Waiting on runway No.2 were five Grumman F9F Panthers jet fighters of the *Primera Escuadrilla Aeronaval de Ataque* (First Naval Air Attack Squadron) and behind them an equal number of Vought F4U-5 Corsairs of the *Segunda Escuadrilla Aeronaval de Ataque* (Second Naval Air Naval Fighter and Attack Squadron) were



Left, Grumman F9F-2 Panther fighters of the Naval Air Attack Squadron Nr.1, at Punta Indio Naval Air Base. Right, the emblem of the Naval Air Attack Squadron Nr.1. (Aviación Naval Argentina)



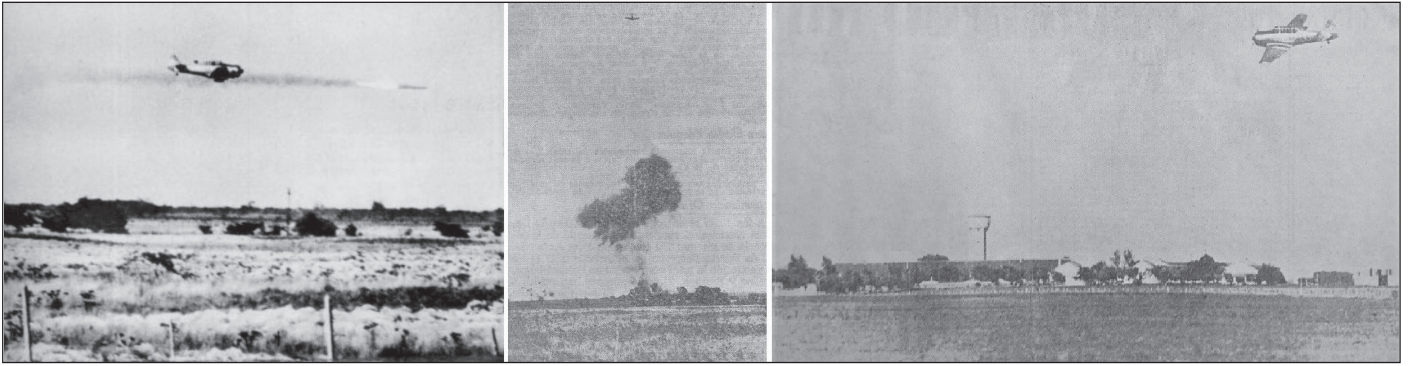
Left, Chance-Vought F4U-5 Corsair fighters of the Naval Air Fighter and Attack Squadron Nr.2 flying to Magdalena on 2 April 1963. Right, the emblem of the Naval Air Fighter and Attack Squadron Nr.2. (Aviación Naval Argentina)



A Naval Aviation Beechcraft C-45. (Histarmar Archives)

lined up, all of them fully armed. The pilots waited in their cockpits while the ground staff carried out the last checks; the aircraft had just completed their refuelling and were waiting for the order to depart as they watched the tanker trucks drive away.

At that precise moment, the Naval Aviation Beechcraft C-45 that had taken off a few minutes earlier made contact with the tower to report that it was approaching Magdalena. From the control centre they gave him the 'okay' and immediately afterwards, the runway was ordered to be cleared.



Left, a naval T-6 attacking a column of Sherman tanks from the Magdalena Cavalry Regiment C.8 with rockets (Aviación Naval Argentina). Centre, a naval T-6 attacking Magdalena (Diario La Prensa). Right, another T-6 in low flight over the C.8 Regiment base in Magdalena (Diario La Nación).



Lt. Julio Pieretti poses with his Grumman F9F-2 Panther fighter, armed with Mk.51 500-pound napalm bombs and 5-inch HVAR rockets. (Teniente de Navío Julio Pieretti)

Around noon the bloodiest episode of the April 1963 days began: the Colorado air attack on the Azul C-8 Tank Cavalry Regiment of Magdalena. The attack was led by the commander of the Punta Indio Naval Air Base, Navy Captain Santiago Sabarots, who was one of the pilots who had bombed the Plaza de Mayo on 16 June 1955, causing 308 civilian deaths. Punta Indio is just a short 40 kilometres from Magdalena, where the tank base was located. The tanks had, in the clashes of September of the previous year, decisively decided the victory for the Azul side. Azul support was concentrated in the Cavalry, despite the logistical superiority of the Colorado side, which had support from the Infantry and the Artillery. Two weeks earlier, the two military units had conducted target practice together.

Before starting the attack, Capt. Sabarots ordered pamphlets to be dropped on the C-8 from a small plane, giving a 20-minute ultimatum:

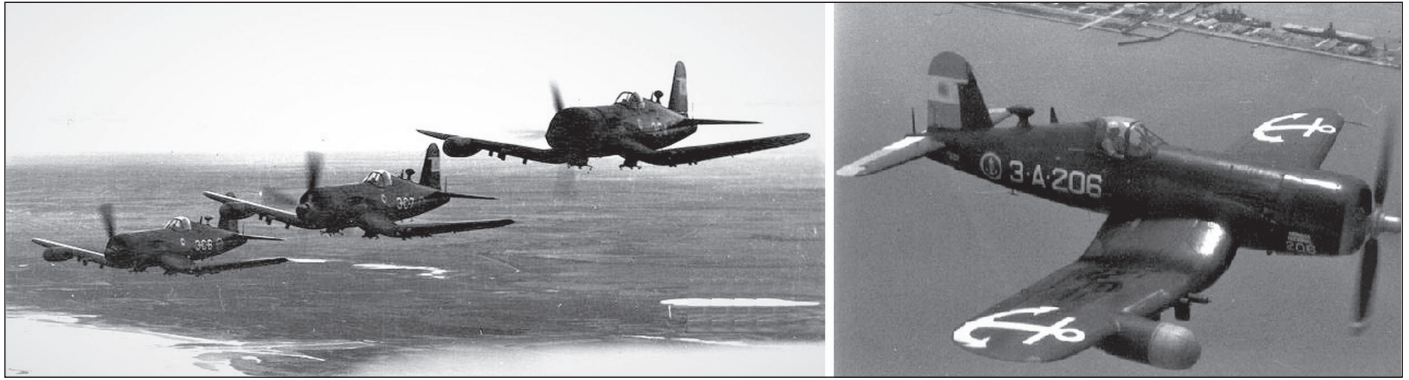
Lieutenant General Benjamín Menéndez, head of the Revolutionary Forces, reports that the La Plata and Communications Regiment Nr.2 of City Bell having been taken over by the Marines of Río Santiago, so we ask the C-8 of Magdalena to surrender to the Revolution or lay down its arms. If not, the regiment will be attacked in 20 minutes.²

Faced with the imminence of the attack, Col. López Aufranc ordered the barracks to be abandoned and the tanks taken into the

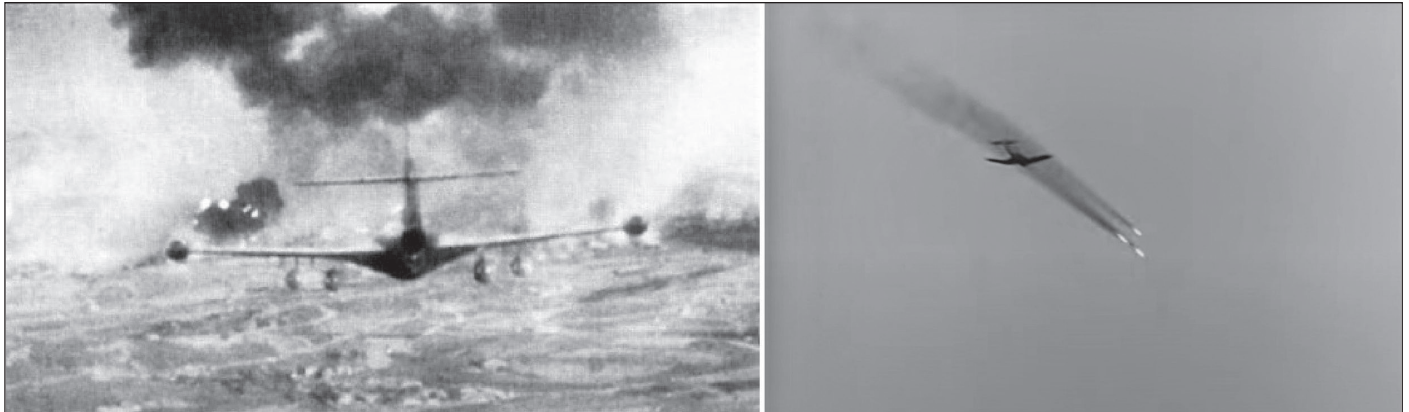
woods to camouflage them and to prevent their destruction. The base was an anthill, and the order was to evacuate the barracks.

When the clocks indicated 11:00, the ground personnel at Punta Indio withdrew to the side of the runway and the pilots gave full power to their T-6 engines. Paying attention to the signalmen, Lieutenant Cándido Chaneton began to taxi, increasing speed as he went. As he neared the opposite end he pulled back the stick, engaged the flaps and began to climb, leaving the hangars and tower down and to his left. It was a magnificent day and the visibility could not have been better. Behind him came Lieutenant Carmelo I. Astesiano, followed by Frigate Lieutenant Julio A. Pieretti, Corvette Lieutenant Héctor Cordero and the rest of the squadron, made up of officers and midshipmen. Pieretti and Cordero had combat experience, as did the base commander, Navy Captain Santiago Sabarots, since they had taken an active part in the *Revolución Libertadora* in 1955.

Once in the air, the aircraft lined up, and as they did so, their pilots checked that everything was in order: power, altitude, speed, revolutions per minute, oil pressure, temperature, fuel flow, and armament. From the tower, Captain Sabarots closely followed the incidents of the flight and gave instructions while informing the revolutionary General Staff of all developments. The planes rose to 6,000 metres and at 233km/h headed for Magdalena, flying over fields, farms and streams. At that precise moment, a new order came from the tower and the Panther jets began their taxi, followed by the Corsairs, showing off the large anchors on their wings. The first



Chance-Vought F4U-5 Corsair fighters of the Argentine Naval Aviation sporting a dark blue paint scheme with large white anchors painted on the wings. (Histarmar Archive).



Left, an F9F-2 Panther attacking the C.8 Tank Regiment base in Magdalena. Right, an F4U-5 Corsair attacking the same target with rockets. (Aviación Naval Argentina)

F9F to depart was registration number 0416/3-A-101, followed in the following order by 0417/3-A-102, 0418/3-A-103, 0419/3-A-104 and 0420/3-A-105. The Corsairs did it with a difference of minutes, preceded by 0384/3-A-211.

At 12:30 the Magdalena tank base began to be attacked by Naval Aviation Grumman Panther and Vought Corsair fighter-bombers with rockets, and with incendiary and high-explosive bombs. Tanks were pouring out of the base as the first plane passed very low, dropping its bombs and firing its cannons at the installations. The Panther and Corsair fighters furiously attacked the column of tanks while the tank crews fired their machine guns to defend themselves. The T-6s also joined the attack on the tanks, dropping 100-kilogram bombs.

Moments later, and taking advantage of the fact that the planes were concentrated on other targets, the tanks reached a grove of trees under which other units of the 1st Section had taken shelter. They were 400 metres from the Regiment's base and from there they could feel the tremor when the bombs exploded. The forest where they were hidden was to one side of the dirt road that linked Magdalena with Punta Indio. On the other side, numerous cattle were drinking water from a trough very close to an armoured vehicle, abandoned because of mechanical damage. One of the attacking aircraft detected it and, believing it to be operational, dropped a napalm bomb on it, also hitting the cattle, which perished horribly. Another Navy plane came immediately behind and machine-gunned an ambulance as it was searching for wounded, killing the driver. There was no doubt that the naval pilots were ready for anything.

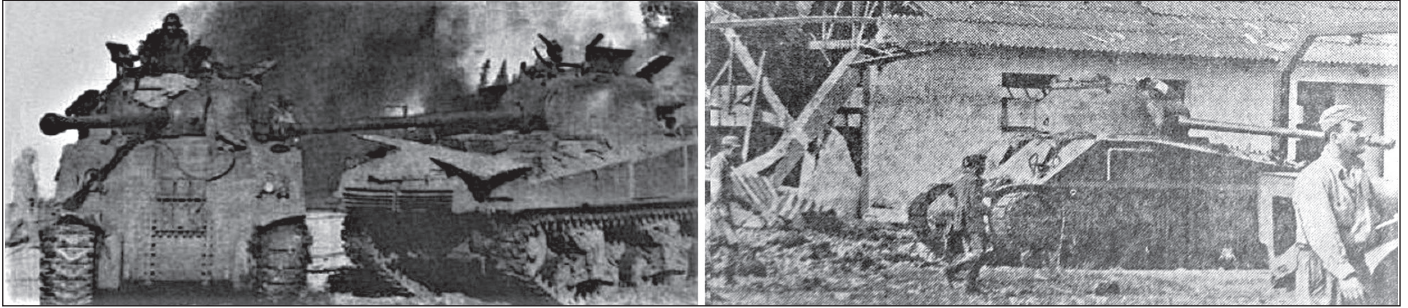
A total of 22 planes attacked the Regiment for 15 hours and dropped more than 100 bombs, including napalm which destroyed a large part of the facilities of the base. Air attacks on the Regiment lasted until 3:00 a.m. the following day, and then they attacked the



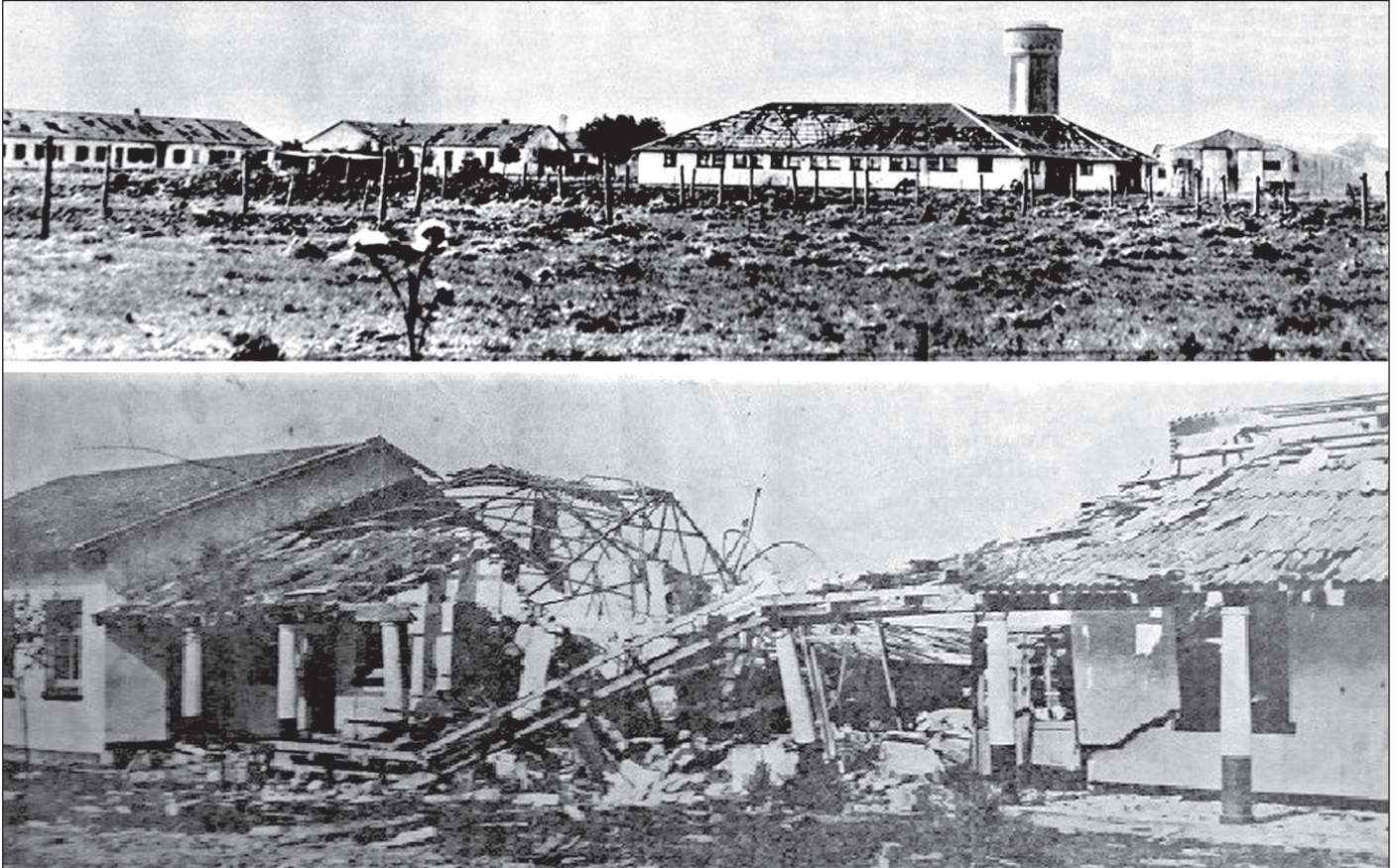
Colonel Alcides López Aufranc, commander of the Magdalena Tank Cavalry Regiment C.8, who was later known as the 'Magdalena Fox' in allusion to Generalfeldmarschall Erwin Rommel. (Public Domain and Bundesarchiv)

troops arriving from Campo de Mayo. Important violations of the laws of war and acts of cruelty by the Colorado Naval Aviation took place, such as attacking ambulances, machine-gunning conscripts who were running for safety from planes, and the use of napalm bombs.

The fighters came from Punta Indio and dropped bombs first and then strafed troops on the ground. According to some witnesses, four of the most 'bloodthirsty' pilots were Lieutenant Chaneton, Lieutenant Astesiano, Frigate Lieutenant Pieretti and Corvette Lieutenant Cordero. They even strafed an ambulance in the belief that Colonel López Aufranc was on it.



Left, a C.8 Regiment Sherman leaving its base during the attack, next to another destroyed Sherman.
Right, a destroyed Sherman at the Magdalena Base. (Diario La Prensa)



Destruction caused by the attack of the naval T-6, F9F-2 and F4U-5 aircraft on the C.8 Tank Cavalry Regiment in Magdalena. (Diario La Razón)

The Air Naval force that attacked Magdalena was composed of:

12 North American T-6 Texans, equipped with three 7.62mm M2 fixed machine guns, 80mm Oerlikon rockets, 5-inch HVAR rockets and 100-kilogram bombs attached to two underwing and one belly mounts;

5 Grumman F9F-2 Panthers equipped with four 20mm M3 cannons, two 127mm HVAR rockets and two 340kg MK-47 napalm bombs;

5 Vought F4U-5 Corsairs with four 20mm M3 cannons each, eight 127mm HVAR anti-tank rockets and 250kg bombs.

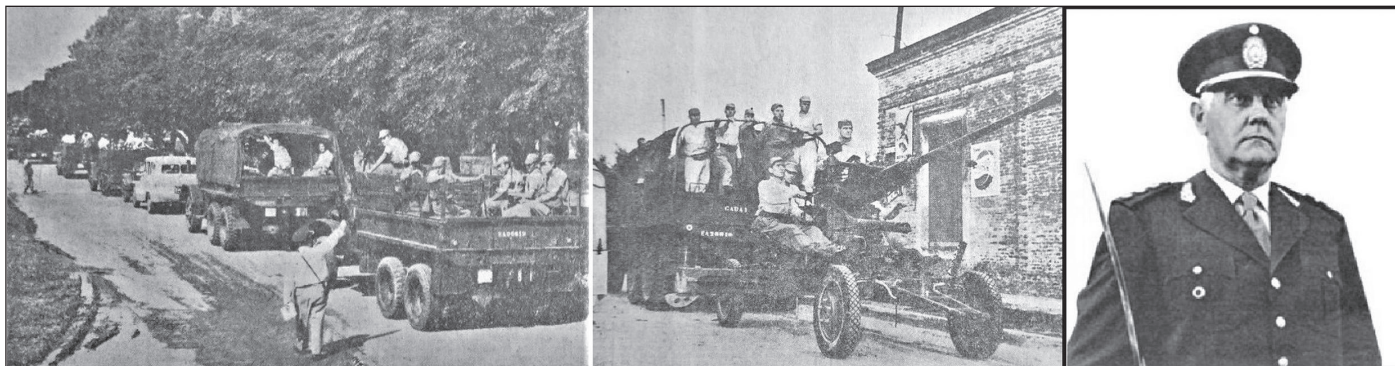
During the night the attacks continued, mainly by the Naval Aviation Vought F4U Corsairs. In the middle of the night, the incursion of the fighters, whose pilots silenced their engines when they started their dive, was preceded by the launching of flares, intended to illuminate the targets. Among the casualties of the Naval Aviation, Corsair serial 0384/3-A-211 was hit by the anti-aircraft batteries of the C-8 and its pilot would land with retracted undercarriage in an open field in Las Talas, near Berisso. Other

Corsair fighters were also hit by AA fire, including 0382/3-A-209, 0378/3-A-205, 0432/3-A-215, 0435/3-A-213 and 0393/3-A-221, but were able to safely return to their base.

Colonel López Aufranc managed to save most of the 70 Sherman tanks that the Regiment had, sending them to the woods where they were camouflaged. Wooden tank models were placed around the base so as to distract the attackers. Because of these tactics Colonel López Aufranc earned the nickname *El Zorro de Magdalena* (The Magdalena Fox), paraphrasing the one applied to the German Generalfeldmarschall Erwin Rommel, during World War II.

La Plata and City Bell

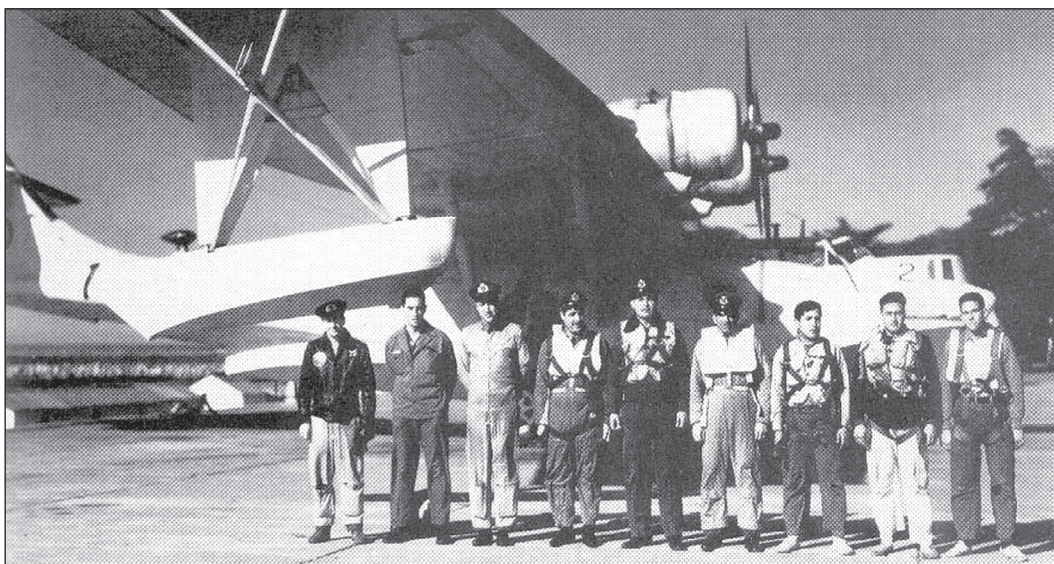
Starting at 9 a.m. Navy planes began to fly over La Plata dropping flyers with revolutionary proclamations. The first was a PBY Catalina that passed over Government House, the police headquarters and the RI7 facilities, located on 51st Street, between 19th and 20th Streets. Minutes later three more aircraft appeared, making low passes while throwing leaflets on the downtown area. In the leaflets, officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers were exhorted to join the revolution or surrender to avoid reprisals.



Left, Loyal Azul troops departing from Campo de Mayo. They were commanded by General Alejandro Agustín Lanusse and Colonel Tomás Sánchez de Bustamante. (Diario La Razón). Centre, Troops from Campo de Mayo continue their advance towards Magdalena, with anti-aircraft artillery pieces. (Diario La Nación). Right, Brigadier General Alejandro Agustín Lanusse. (Public Domain)

At 7:45 p.m., the Press Secretariat of the Presidency of the Nation released Communiqué Nr.5 from President Guido:

The bulk of the Marine Infantry entered through Bosque Avenue and stopped at Plaza Rivadavia, on 1st Street and 52nd Avenue, and in front of the police headquarters. The marines took up positions in front of the building, placing machine gun nests, mortars, checkpoints and even a threatening recoilless cannon, ready to open fire. From there they ordered the police to surrender, a situation that occurred at 9:45a.m., when a white flag appeared on the upper flagpole. The police headquarters was occupied, allowing the bulk of the force to go to Government House



The complete crew of the Boeing PB2B-1 Canse serial 1-G-2 of Naval Aviation in the 1960s. (Histarmar Archive)

to do the same. The commander of the Marine Infantry Battalion Nr.3 (BIM 3), Frigate Captain Aldo Luis Bachmann, entered, accompanied by several officers, and once in front of the federal comptroller, Dr Félix Trigo Viera, he notified him that from that moment he was under the orders of the rebel command. Bachmann told Viera to remain in the place for security reasons and established severe controls, preventing entry to the palace and movement inside it. Revolutionary civil commandos headed by Dr Euclides Ventura Cardozo, collaborated in the tasks by mounting guard and carrying out surveillance rounds.

Simultaneously, the Argentino Theatre and the neighbouring Radio Provincia were occupied, from where revolutionary proclamations began to be broadcast.

At 11:00 a.m., the radio and television stations in La Plata, in the hands of the Colorado forces, called for the evacuation of the houses near the Communications Battalion Nr.2 of City Bell, in the hands of the Azul side, to prevent possible bombardments. Panic seized the population who formed long caravans of vehicles, as well as men, women, children and the elderly on foot, to flee from the place. At 11:30 a fifth plane flew over the RI7 ordering it to surrender and when it did, the naval infantry were deployed on the ground surrounding their facilities. As the response was a long time in coming, the plane made a new pass and launched a gas bomb that hit the parade ground. Faced with such a deployment, the head of the unit understood that he could do nothing against such

a well-prepared force, which is why, considering its fire potential and the training of its cadres in the face of its recently incorporated conscripts, he decided to capitulate. There were minutes left before noon and the radios continued to broadcast announcements.

In the afternoon, two Gloster Meteor fighters, belonging to the Morón VII Air Brigade, strafed and bombed LS-11 Radio Provincia, in the centre of the city of La Plata, destroying the antennas and the building and creating large craters. Shortly after at 4:50 p.m., a Panther fighter from Punta Indio bombed the headquarters of Communications Battalion Nr.2 with napalm; the attack was repeated minutes later, destroying the facilities and seriously injuring several soldiers.

Faced with the attack on Communications Battalion Nr.2 (B2C), the Infantry Regiment Nr.7 (Azul), located nearby, sent 30 men, equipped with machine guns and 7.62mm calibre heavy weapons to support the B2C. Upon reaching kilometre 12, 1,000 metres from the objective, they clashed with Marine Corps troops (Colorado) that had surrounded the unit. Under heavy fire, the Azules surrendered and were taken prisoner.

Immediately after midday, the motorised column from Campo de Mayo under the command of newly promoted Brigadier General Alejandro Agustín Lanusse (Azul), led by the C-10 Tank Cavalry Regiment, under the command of Colonel Tomás Sánchez de Bustamante, set out towards the area of La Plata and Magdalena held by the Colorados. Upon reaching La Tablada, the column joined

forces with the Motorised Infantry Regiment Nr.3 (RIM3) under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Jorge Manuel García Sanabria. The troops stopped at the Gutiérrez intersection (Centenario and General Belgrano roads), at the gates of City Bell, as it was beginning to get dark. During the deployment to La Plata, the column was strafed by Corsair and Panther fighters from the Naval Aviation, which also dropped bombs, causing many casualties, but it continued to advance towards its objective.

The President of the Nation makes a peremptory call for the sanity of those who today rose up against the legal authorities. At this time when the final stage of a difficult process is being reached for the Republic to find a democratic solution, adopting such attitudes is important to attack the true interests of the Nation. Men-at-arms must seriously reflect on their responsibility to the people of their country. The Executive Power has in its hands the appropriate means to avoid unacceptable totalitarian excesses, and it will use it if necessary. No one should anticipate events. We must all trust in the good sense of the citizenry.

José María Guido, President of the Nation³

The column under the command of General Lanusse entered La Plata at 9:30 p.m., easily retaking control of the city, because the bulk of the Colorado troops had withdrawn towards the Santiago River, leaving behind a minimal number, which included 25 armed civilians. They surrendered without any fighting. At 10:30 p.m., a general blackout was ordered and traffic was cut off on the main roads. With La Plata secured, Lanusse set out to attack the rebel base at Punta Indio. At 2 in the morning he arrived in Magdalena where he met with Colonel López Aufranc to plan the attack on the rebel garrison that had attacked the Magdalena Regiment.

Córdoba

From a territorial point of view, Córdoba was the province in which the Colorado side had the most support. Civil support for the Colorado side included a broad sector of the UCRP, led by Juan Palmero, Eduardo Gamond, Jorge Henocho Aguiar, Donato Latella Frías and Rodolfo Amuchástegui, supporters of a civil-military insurrectionary solution, which was opposed by local leaders such

as Arturo Illia and Eduardo Angeloz. Shortly before the uprising, in a crowded event held in Río Cuarto, Admiral Isaac Rojas, former vice President of the *Revolución Libertadora* that had overthrown Perón and figurehead leader of the ongoing coup conspiracy against Guido, had described Córdoba as the “moral capital of the Republic.”

In the city of Córdoba, the Colorado uprising was characterised by having a large number of civil combatants, mainly radicals and university students, commanded by the lawyer Guillermo Becerra Ferrer, Palmero, Gamond and Enoch Aguiar. Other leaders of the radical civil commandos were Julio Ruiz Orrico, Nicolás Brandalise, Arturo Gallegos, Ramón Mansilla, Medardo Ávila Vázquez (years later founder of the National Coordinating Board), Víctor Ferreyra, Héctor Sánchez and Enrique Becerra, among others. The Colorado side was strong in the Airborne Troops School, located in the Capital, and at the Gendarmerie School, near Jesús María.

About a thousand soldiers belonging to the Airborne Troops School took the bank of the Suquía River that divides the city, the main radio stations (including LRA7 Radio Nacional), the Central Post Office, the 14th police station and the bus terminal. The Azul troops were commanded by General Carlos Roberto Moore, Commander of III Army Corps based in the city.

3 April

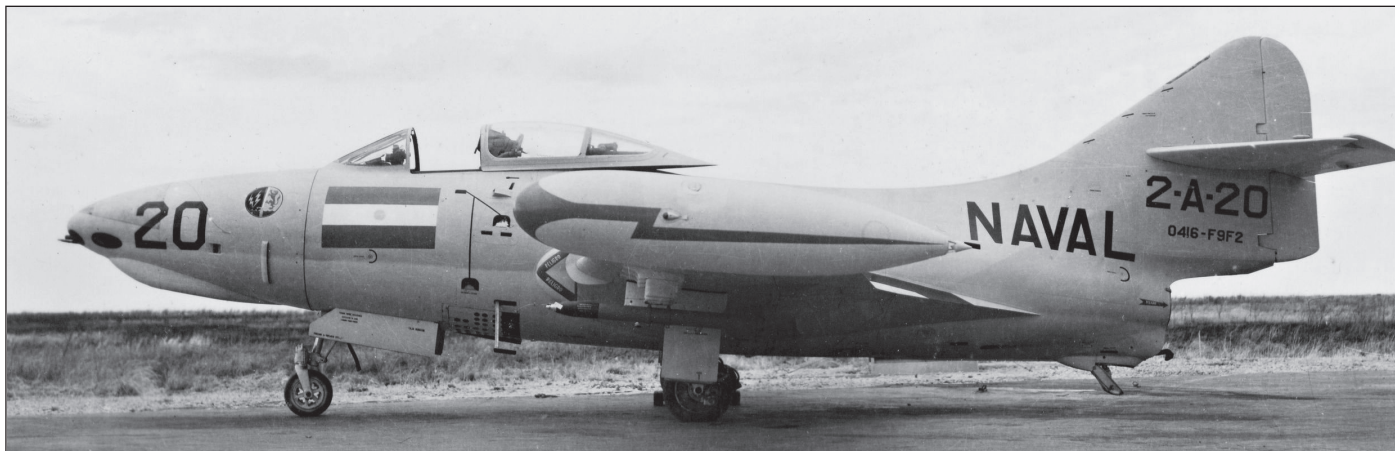
Air Raid on the Punta Indio Base

On 3 April the Azules attacked the positions taken by the Colorados, who withdrew to concentrate on Puerto Belgrano, south of the province of Buenos Aires. The main objective was the Punta Indio Naval Air Base, commanded by Navy Captain Santiago Sabarots, whose planes the previous day had devastated the nearby C-8 Magdalena Tank Regiment, causing 9 of the 12 deaths that the Azul side would lose in this conflict.

In the early hours of 3 April, it was not yet known what attitude the Air Force Commander-in-Chief would adopt, and this could be decisive in tilting the balance towards the Navy (Colorado) or the Army (mostly Azul). The Air Force had been changing its positions according to the perceptions that were emerging from the fighting, often contradictory, which is why it was called ‘The Pancake Force’. Initially, it had been inclined not to open fire against the rebels, but the preaching of Under-Secretary of Aeronautics, Eduardo



Paratroopers from the School of Airborne Troops (ETA) of Córdoba. Left, these soldiers are wearing M44 ETA helmets with nets in the early 1960s; at the same time, paratroopers carried folding FAL rifles (centre); a short time later the American M1 helmet was adopted (right). (1982 Militaria Forum)



A Grumman F9F-2 Panther fighter of the Naval Aviation at the Punta Indio Base. (E. Raczynski Collection)



Three Avro Lincoln heavy bombers can be seen in this photo at their base in Villa Reynolds in the early 1960s. (Dirección de Estudios Históricos de la Fuerza Aérea Argentina)

McLoughlin about Commander-in-Chief Brigadier General Carlos Armanini tipped the balance for the Azul side and ended up defining the so-called 'Four-Day War.'

During that day, some Naval Aviation Grumman F9F-2 Panther jets carried out a mission against Azul ground targets in the vicinity of Verónica (Buenos Aires Province) using 5-inch rockets at an angle of 35 degrees.

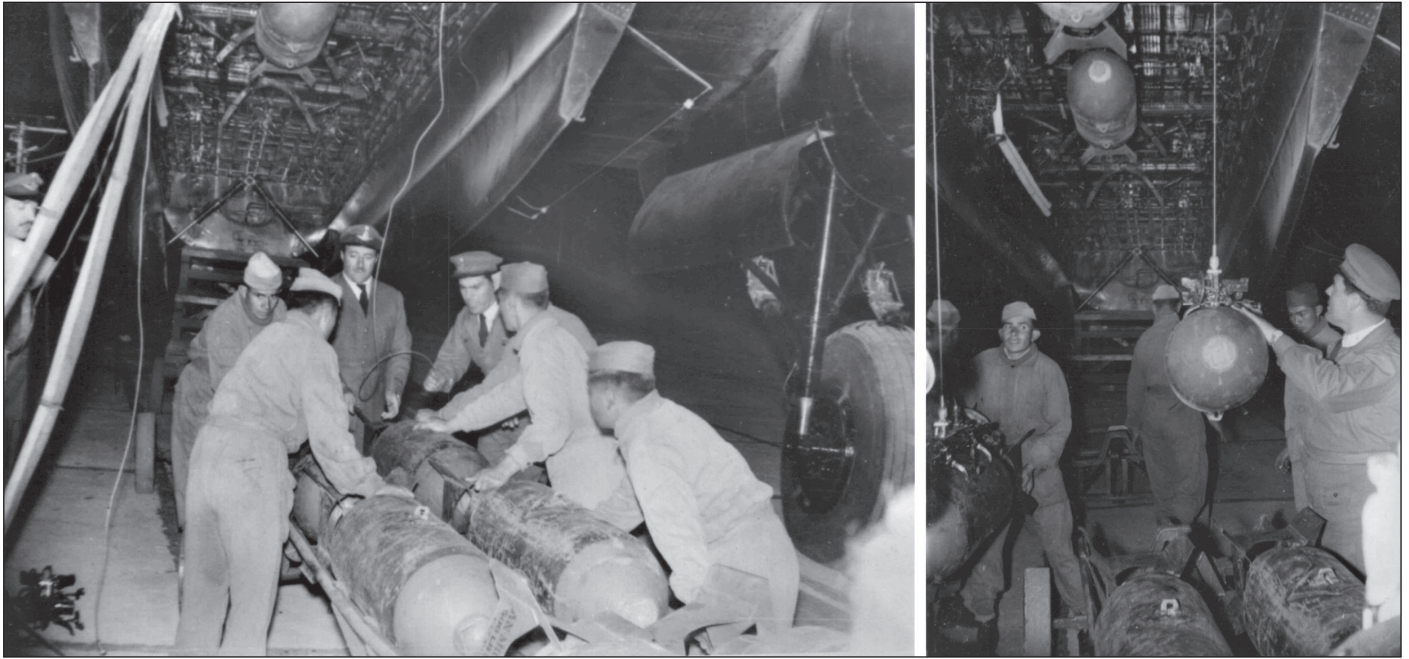
Following directives from Brigadier General Armanini, two Avro Lincoln bombers from Villa Reynolds, San Luis, four N.A. F-86F Sabres from the Fighter-Bomber Group 1 (CB-1) and the same number of Morane-Saulnier MS.760 Paris jet trainers belonging to the Attack Group Nr.1 of IV Air Brigade, based in El Plumerillo, Mendoza province, were prepared to attack the Punta Indio Naval Air Base on the morning of the 3 April. They had arrived the previous day to reinforce Groups 2 and 3 (CB-2 & CB-3) of Fighter-Bombers of VII Air Brigade and start operations immediately.

By then, the unit was readying its Gloster Meteor F.Mk.IV fighters, which had participated so actively during the fighting in June and September 1955, and its command maintained a permanent liaison with the General Staff to keep it informed and receive orders.

Air Force Commodore Juan Pierrestegui commanded Group 1 and Vice Commodore



Azul camouflaged half-track vehicles and Sherman tanks advance from Campo de Mayo towards Punta Indio. (Diario La Razón)



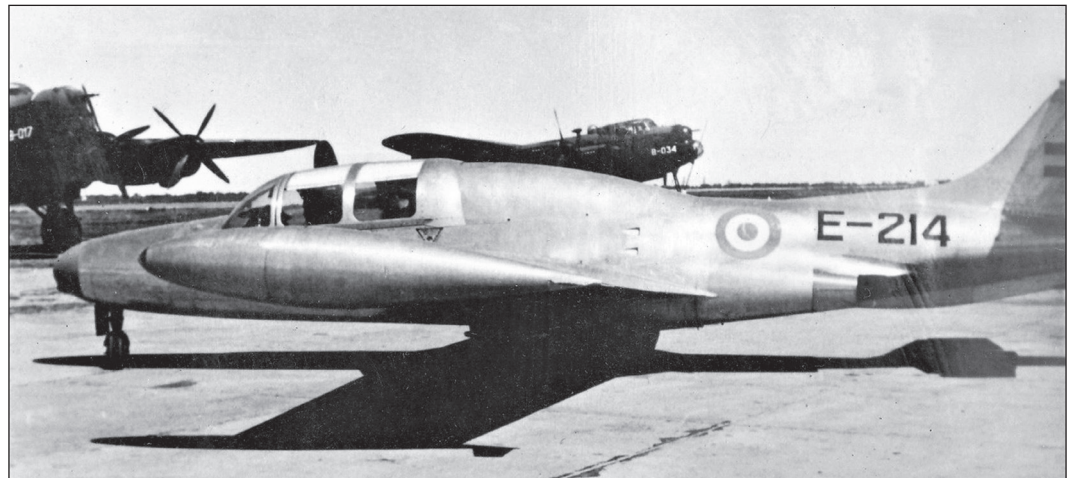
An Air Force non-commissioned officer supervises the loading of bombs on an Avro Lincoln heavy bomber. (Dirección de Estudios Históricos de la Fuerza Aérea Argentina)



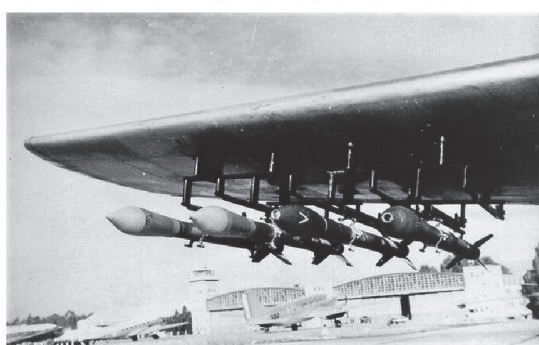
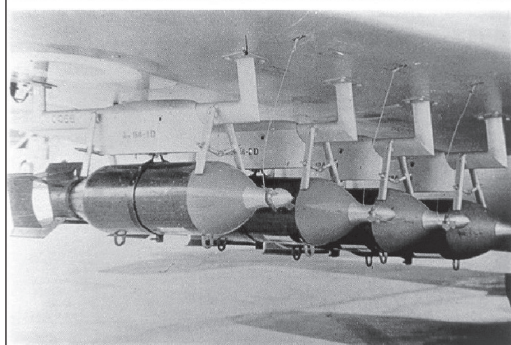
Four North American F-86F Sabre fighters can be seen in this photo at their base at Mendoza's El Plumerillo Airport in the early 1960s. (E. Raczynski Collection)

Fernando Manuel Pérez Colmán commanded Group 2, standing out among the pilots who took part in the actions, were First Lieutenants José Etcheverry, Juan Carlos Gabanet, Alexis de Nogaetz, Carlos Speranza, Hugo Giampaolletti, Juan Manuel Baigorria and Lieutenant Anselmo Stigarria.

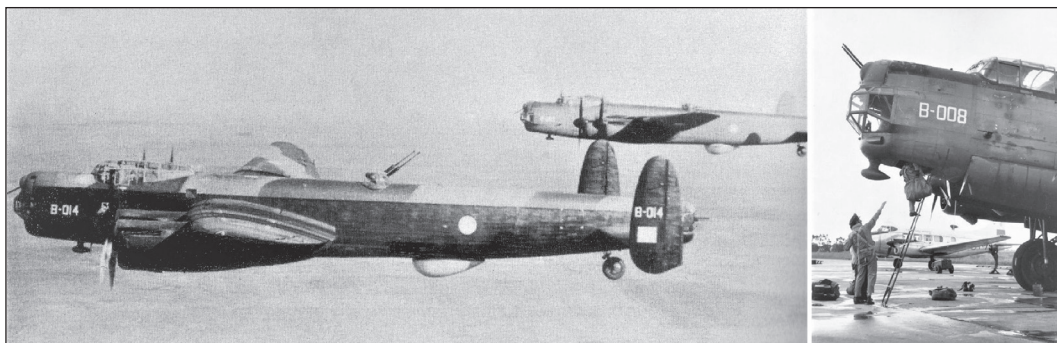
The Naval Aviation under the command of Captain Sabarots was surprised by a manoeuvre planned by the Air Force. Taking advantage of the lack of definition of



In the foreground, a Morane-Saulnier M.S. 760 Paris. In the background, an Avro Lincoln and an Avro Lancaster in their base at Villa Reynolds in the early 1960s. (E. Raczynski collection)



Above, an impressive line-up of Gloster Meteor F.Mk.IV interceptor fighters in the early 1960s. Below left, the racks of a Meteor with bombs. Below right, Matra T-10 rockets. (Dirección de Estudios Históricos de la Fuerza Aérea Argentina)



Left, two Avro Lincoln heavy bombers. In the foreground, one with the original RAF camouflage and the rear one in two shades of grey. Right, a crew boarding a Lincoln. A De Havilland Dove can be seen in the back. (Juan Carlos Cicales)



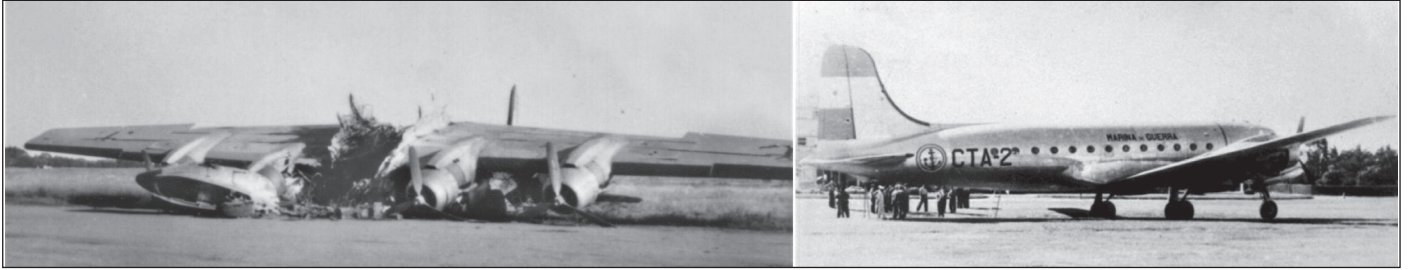
Left, Commodore Juan Pierrestegui who commanded Group 1 of Sabre fighters and MS-760 attack jets for the raid on Punta Indio. Right, Vice Commodore Fernando Pérez Colmán, who led Group 2 of Meteor fighters for the attack on Punta Indio on 3 April 1963. (Dirección de Estudios Históricos de la Fuerza Aérea Argentina)

the force, two F-86F Sabre jets requested authorisation from Punta Indio to refuel as 'neutrals'. The two pilots landed and were personally attended to by Captain Sabarots. After refuelling, both fighters took off and suddenly attacked the anti-aircraft defences, leaving the base defenceless against the attack of the rest of the squadron, which emptied their ammunition onto the airfield in a coordinated manner minutes later.

At around the same time, two hours after landing in Morón and after carrying out the checks typical of an attack operation, the Avro Lincoln bombers took off towards Punta Indio. It was dawn when the heavy bombers rose slowly, one after the other, and headed west, climbing to 15,000 feet at a speed of about 250 mph. In these conditions they flew over the Federal Capital at 06:45. At the height of Florencio Varela they made a short turn to the right and from there they continued to Magdalena, orienting themselves by the Río de la Plata that ran to their left and the provincial capital that began to emerge on the horizon. The crews knew that the enemy was continuing their attacks and for that reason, the radar operators remained attentive while the co-pilots observed the panorama with their binoculars. Minutes later, they made out the columns of smoke rising from the C-8 and

before reaching its perimeter, they began their descent.

The Avro Lincolns crossed the tributary of the Primera Estancia creek and 10 kilometres later they opened their bomb doors. The bombers dropped 6,350 kilograms of high-explosives, rose at high speed, then turned west and disappeared into the distance as anti-aircraft batteries tried to catch them. Another version of this same mission, however, relates that the Lincoln bombers could not find the target due to the low cloud ceiling and the possible interception of Panther fighters of the Naval Aviation, so they unloaded their bombs in the Río de la Plata before returning to their base. Behind these bombers came Gloster Meteors, strafing and bombing the installations, and immediately afterwards F-86F Sabres, which fired their rockets against the naval base. The anti-aircraft fire failed to damage them, nor the Morane-Saulnier M.S.760 Paris jets led by Captain Juan Miguel Arbeleche that appeared next.



Left, Douglas DC-4 serial 0290/CTA-2 was destroyed by a direct hit from a bomb dropped by a Gloster Meteor. Right, the same Douglas in better times. (E. Raczynski collection)



Left, Douglas C-47 serial 0281/CTA-12 of the Naval Transport Command, also destroyed by the impact of a bomb dropped by a Meteor, turning it into a ball of fire (Dr Atilio Marino collection). Right, the same C-47 in better times (Cicales-Raczynski collection).



In the foreground, three F9F-2 jets destroyed during the attack on Punta Indio on 3 April 1963. Two intact Panthers can be seen in the back. (Dr Atilio Marino collection)

The situation had changed and from being aggressors, the Navy suddenly became the victim of aggression. A bomb dropped by a Gloster Meteor hit Douglas DC-4 serial 0290/CTA-2, destroying it completely and another hit C-47 serial 0281/CTA-12 of the Naval Transport Command, turning it into a ball of fire. The aircraft was parked near a hangar and was highly valued for having taken part in the historic flight to the South Pole, under the command of Navy Captain Hermes Quijada.

In successive attacks, Panthers serial numbers 0416/3-A-101, 0423/3-A-108, 0450/3-A-118 and 0457/3-A-



Another view of the destroyed DC-4 serial 0290/CTA-2. (E. Raczynski collection)



More F9F-2 Panther fighters destroyed and damaged on the ground by the attack. (Dr Atilio Marino collection)



Two Grumman S-2A Trackers received damage during the attack on Punta Indio. (Dr Atilio Marino collection)



Three F4U-5 Corsair fighters damaged during the bombing raid of the Punta Indio Naval Air Base. (Dr Atilio Marino collection)

121 were destroyed and 0417/3-A-102 and 0455/3-A-114 severely damaged, along with 16 other aircraft parked on the ground. Some other Panthers, such as 0420/2-A-105, 0447/3-A-113, 0451/3-A-110 and 0455/3-A-114 which received minor damage, were repaired later. Four Vought F4U Corsairs (registrations 203, 209, 221 and 225), and two Grumman S-2 Trackers (registrations 3-AS-3 and 3-AS-5) were also damaged. Corsairs 201 and 205 were slightly damaged and were later repaired.

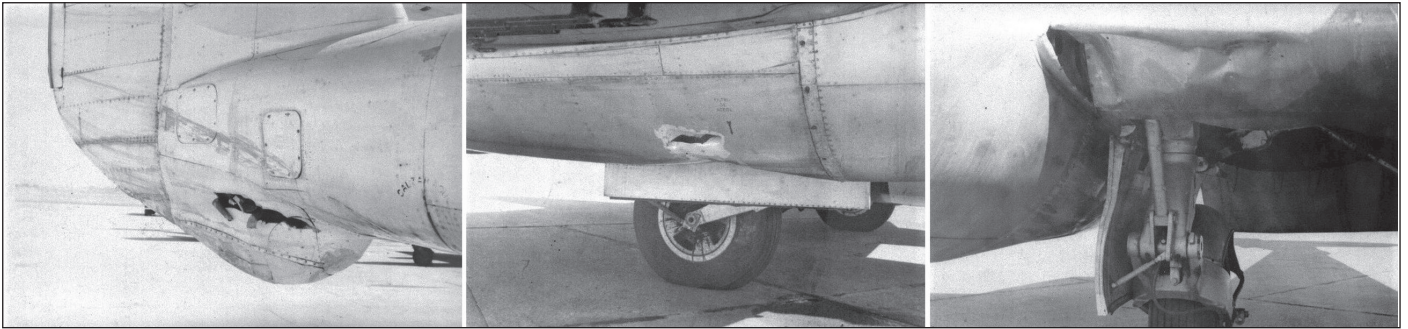
Later, a section of F-86F carried out offensive reconnaissance between Mar del Plata and Morón. In the afternoon, the Argentine Air Force C-47 returned to Mendoza transferring the relief crews of the aircraft. After that, the section of the Sabre Jets was commanded by Captain Eduardo Giosa.

A few kilometres to the northwest, the appearance of the C-8 barracks was frightening. Nearly all of its buildings were in ruins,

12 tanks were destroyed, and at least 9 dead and 22 wounded lay in the rubble, after 10 hours of continuous bombardment. Recruits and non-commissioned officers proceeded to collect the bodies to carefully lay them on the pavement, near the headquarters, while the majority of the men proceeded to remove the remains of masonry, pipes and plates scattered around the perimeter. A quick count allowed the dead to be identified. They were, Lieutenant Francisco A. Leiva, Sergeant Oscar N. González, 1st Corporal José I. Agüero, Corporal Julio C. Rodríguez, 41st class soldiers Osvaldo Peralta, Cornelio E. Haedo and Julio Martín Astiz and the 42nd class soldiers Constantino Bobolis and Eduardo Bastino. General Lanusse's troops also suffered fatalities, including conscripts Oscar Decafe, Arno and Lueger.



Anti-Aircraft Artillery Group of the Naval Air Base of Punta Indio. (Histarmar Archives)



AA fire damage to some of the Air Force Gloster Meteor from the attack on Punta Indio. (Histarmar Archives)



A destroyed F4U-5 Corsair fighter at Punta Indio base. (P. Siebel Collection)

The Anti-Aircraft Defence Artillery Group 1 (GADA-1) deployed its Bofors 40/60 guns, and the tanks positioned themselves pointing towards the base. At that time Punta Indio was in chaos. With his facilities levelled, his planes destroyed, and some of his personnel wounded, Captain Sabarots knew he needed to increase his defensive measures if he was to buy time to get his people out. But the enemy did not give him time. Given the directive by the radio transmitters, the artillery and the Azul tanks opened fire making the earth tremble. The situation soon became untenable for the rebels, but even so, they resisted all morning, allowing the evacuation of a good part of the personnel.

Colonel López Aufranc's harangue was forceful, "Punta Indio had to be razed!" ... and towards there he left, taking his tanks through alternative roads and cultivated fields.

The air raids continued uninterruptedly until 9 a.m., now attacking the outposts of General Lanusse who had just made contact with Colonel López Aufranc.

The order reached the tankers in stages. They had to get their units ready and prepare to march on Punta Indio. The C-8 tanks led the way, preceding the Campo de Mayo forces. They did it through different approach routes, always harassed by enemy aircraft. An hour later, the suppression forces stopped in front of the rebel unit and awaited instructions.

During a halt in the actions, the Army troops saw several planes take off and once over the Río de la Plata, flew directly to Uruguay. The artillery barrage lasted until noon, when the tanks began to advance covered by artillery. On that day, an Argentine Air Force mediator tried to land at Punta Indio to ask the naval aviators to drop their attitude. First with MS-760 and later with a Beech Mentor. In both cases the flight tower did not authorise the landing. A section of Gloster Meteor fighters, firing tracer ammunition in an intimidating manner, drove off two naval aircraft attacking the tanks.

Taking advantage of a pause in the air raids, finding the sky clear of enemy aircraft, Captain Sabarots launched new attacks, trying to stop the armoured columns that were coming at them. That would give him time to organise the evacuation and prevent his



The Anti-Aircraft Defence Artillery Group 1 (GADA-1) deployed its Bofors 40/60 guns to the area of Punta Indio Naval Air Base. (Ejército Argentino)



Colonel Alcides López Aufranc (right), Commander of the Magdalena C.8 Tank Regiment, tours the Punta Indio facilities with his Aide, after taking the base. (Ejército Argentino)



Remains of the Panther serial 0422/3-A-107, which was shot down by the Anti-Aircraft Artillery in the area of Los Talas, Berisso. Its pilot, Corvette Captain Ramón Corbera ejected. Firefighters from the cities of Berisso and La Plata examine the remains. (Diario La Nación)

people from being taken prisoner. Three squadrons made up of AT-6 Texans, F4U-5 Corsairs, and F9F Panthers headed for the first tanks, dropping their bombs on them and riddled their hulls. Several soldiers were injured, some with serious burns, and given the intensity of the combat, great efforts were necessary to evacuate them.

That day, the anti-aircraft defences shot down two Naval Aviation Panther jets, serials 0422/3-A-107 and 0424/3-A-109, whose pilots, Corvette Captain Ramón Corbera and Frigate Lieutenant Carmelo Astesiano Agote respectively, managed to eject successfully. They fell in an open field, near the coast, the first at 2 a.m. in the area of La Maza, near Los Talas, Berisso. The second jet was shot down near the 'La Hermosura' establishment on Route Nr.11. There is another version of this episode regarding the aforementioned Panther jets, which states that they collided in the air near Punta Indio due to poor visibility in the area. Guns and tanks continued to fire as the last of the naval contingent boarded a plane and left for neighbouring Uruguay. Captain Sabarots waited for everyone to be inside and before boarding, he contacted the Secretary of the Navy to communicate the decision. Practically on the steps, he handed over command to the Frigate Captain Raúl Torrent and once on board he ordered the take off. At that precise moment, the first tanks broke through the perimeter of the base.

The picture that the Army troops found was shocking. The buildings were ruined, many of them burning, numerous planes lay reduced to scrap metal and lifeless bodies were seen across the inner squares and streets. Everything suggested that the departure of the rebels had been hasty and without order. Very few officers remained in place, accompanied by non-commissioned officers and conscripts who wandered around the premises aimlessly, completely disoriented. The Azul troops



Left, the control tower and the main building of the Punta Indio Naval Air Base, after the attack. Right, Sherman tanks from the C.8 and C.10 Regiments block the Punta Indio runway. (Diario La Nación)



The national and international press widely covered the events of 1962 and 1963 in Argentina. These are only two examples, on the left, La Plata newspaper *El Día* and on the right, Madrid newspaper *ABC*. (Diarios *El Día* and *ABC*)

forced them to raise their arms and after disarming them, ordered them to sit on the ground and keep their hands behind their heads.

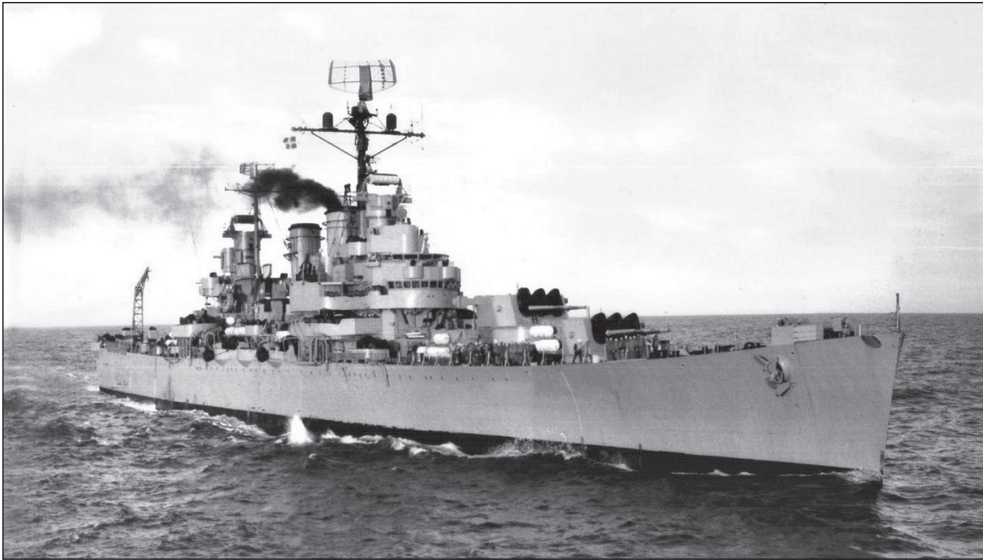
The first to appear was the base chaplain wearing a military uniform. He did so in front of General Sánchez de Bustamante, who, seeing him, alighted from the half-track, in which he had arrived, and greeted him respectfully. Extremely Catholic and respectful of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, General Sánchez de Bustamante assessed

the situation and asked the priest to take charge of gathering the dead and providing care to the wounded.

At night, the concentration of troops from the various units that made up the suppression forces was notable. Troops from Campo de Mayo, La Tablada, Ciudadela and other garrisons filled the base's dining room and spoke animatedly about the events they had experienced.



Left, the aircraft carrier V-1 ARA *Independencia* of the Argentine Navy. Right, the Coat of Arms of the ARA *Independencia*. (Histarmar Archives)



Left, heavy cruiser C-4 ARA *General Belgrano*. Right, the ARA Belgrano's Coat of Arms. (Histarmar Archives).

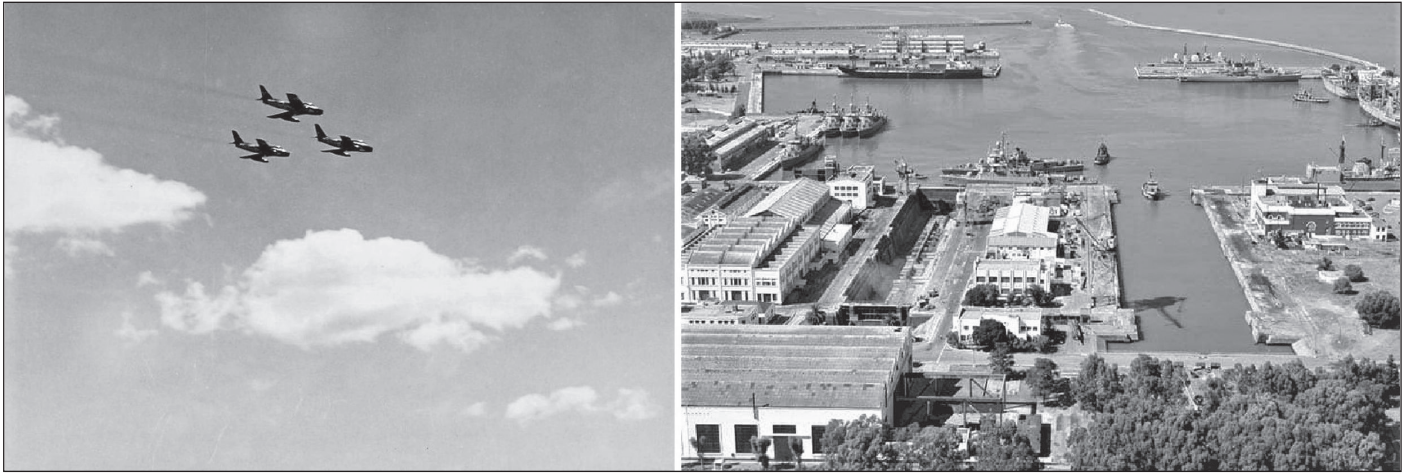


Left, North American F-86F serial 102 of the CB-1 Group in the early 1960s. Right, Two F-86F pilots discuss before an operational sortie. (E. Raczynski collection)

The discharge of the recruits in military service in that naval unit was ordered, as well as the immediate transfer of the wounded and the arrest of officers and non-commissioned officers, many of whom managed to escape the next day, dressed as conscripts.

Mar del Plata

On the night of 2 April, the Sea Fleet continued sailing towards Buenos Aires under the command of Admiral Eladio Vázquez, who exercised command from the cruiser ARA *General Belgrano* (C-4). At 12:30 the following morning the fleet passed in front of Necochea



On 3 April, three N.A. F-86F Sabre fighters bombed the Puerto Belgrano Naval Base causing some damage. (Public Domain)

and two hours later it passed through Mar del Plata, led by the aircraft carrier *ARA Independencia* (V-1) whose aircraft crews were on deck, ready to go into action.

At the same time, troops from the cities of Azul, Olavarría and Tandil were approaching along Route 88, forcing the rebels to withdraw the armed guards they had established at the two radio stations and to reinforce the accesses. The Azul troops passed through the town of Las Armas at 3:00 p.m. (600 men in 30 trucks), followed by those from Tandil and Olavarría (about 3,000 troops) after a squadron of Gloster Meteors had carried out low flights over the Colorado cantonments of the city at 2:10 p.m.,

Bahía Blanca

The fight in the extreme south of Buenos Aires was also intense. At 09:05 a.m., three F-86F Sabre jets bombed Puerto Belgrano. A projectile thrown from a great height hit 20 metres from the naval arsenal, narrowly avoiding a tragedy of some size.

Córdoba

In the morning of 3 April, numerous confrontations took place in Córdoba, which kept the population on edge for several hours. The previous morning, the military authorities were attending the shooting exercises in La Calera when, around 9 a.m., they were informed that a revolutionary movement had broken out and that military units in different parts of the country had withdrawn. The manoeuvres were suspended and the troops returned to their bases to start preparations.

General Carlos Roberto Moore, commander of III Corps, went to his command post accompanied by his staff, and from there requested information to enable him to follow events closely. Both the troops and the police were in barracks, checkpoints were established and preventive measures were adopted pending developments.

When, in the afternoon, revolutionary forces, including civilian commandos, seized the main radio stations, the garrisons were placed on alert and a general mobilisation was ordered. The occupation of the Central Post Office, LRA7 Radio Nacional and the 14th police station were proof that important events were about to take place in the Mediterranean capital.

Transport services began to be reduced, and at 8:00 p.m. they were suspended; theatres, bars and restaurants closed their doors and businesses did the same to prevent violent events. As night fell, revolutionary civilian commandos stormed the bus terminal and broadcast proclamations in support of the uprising through their loudspeakers.

At 2 a.m. on 3 April, troops from III Army Corps arrived in two trucks and attacked the bus station, which they recovered after an intense firefight. Several of the aggressors fled, although most were captured and taken to various locations. At almost the same time, a rebel force made up of cadres from the Airborne Troops School and civilian militiamen took over the LV2 radio transmission plant, located on the road to Buenos Aires, and confronted a section of 10 soldiers from the Artillery School, led by an officer. The firing that took place was brief but intense; at least two defenders fell wounded and the rest ended up overwhelmed by the numerical superiority of the enemy. The aggressors destroyed the equipment and after cutting several cables, they left taking the weapons of their opponents with them.

Shortly after, the same was done in LV3 Cerro de las Rosas radio station, previously evacuated by loyal troops who, when withdrawing, had left an artillery piece abandoned.

At 6:20 in the morning there was intense fighting in the area of the Alvear bridge over the Suquía River, at a time when troops of the Cavalry and the Artillery School were trying to arrest some civilians who were carrying weapons. Calling on them to stop, the unknown men opened fire as they crossed the bridge to the north bank in search of protection. Paratroopers from the Airborne Troops School were positioned at the scene, and covered the militiamen with a heavy fire. Several rebels were wounded in the confrontation, one of them seriously.

Ten minutes later, a second fight took place, in this case on the Centenario bridge, four blocks from the previous one, where Roque Sáenz Peña Avenue crosses. At that point another rebel group was stationed, to which the fugitives who had arrived from the Alvear bridge had joined. When troops from the Artillery School were present under the command of Second Lieutenant Malena, they opened fire from the other side of the river with machine guns and rifles, forcing the newcomers to seek cover. Two soldiers were wounded, and at least three were hit in the Colorado ranks.

At 08:30, troops responding to the command of III Army Corps managed to corner the enemy cadres who had positioned themselves strongly in Las Heras Park. The attack was determined, especially on the rebel command post located on Bedoya Street, very close to Plaza Armada Argentina, and which was surrounded by barricades erected the day before with buses, trucks and seized trailers. The pressure on the Colorado positions was felt and after an hour and a half of combat, they were forced to evacuate the sector, releasing several armed civilians in their retreat who ended up being taken to prison.



Pajas Blancas International Airport of the city of Córdoba in the late 1950s. An Air Force Douglas DC-4 can be seen. (Archivo General de la Nación)

As the shooting continued until after noon, even with low overflights of loyal planes, businesses closed their doors, schools suspended classes, public offices declared holidays and the movement of vehicles and pedestrians was interrupted.

The clashes extended into the Santa Rita neighbourhood, where exhausted rebel soldiers continued to fight. They resisted firmly until midnight but seeing that the promised reinforcements did not arrive, began to give in and as they did so, tried to slip away, receiving the humanitarian collaboration of the neighbourhood. Several civilian residents were injured by bullets and shrapnel in Alta Córdoba, and they were referred to the National Hospital of Clinics together with some soldiers from the Artillery School.

Jujuy

On 2 April, a group of officers under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Urbano de la Vega, with the collaboration of Colonels Galíndez and Jones, raised the Mountain Artillery Regiment Nr.2 in revolt and arrested its commander, Lieutenant Colonel Horacio Guglielmone.

On 3 April, in order to prepare for the suppression of the Colorado insurrection, the provincial authorities ordered the evacuation of the neighbourhoods 25 de Mayo, Ciudad de Nieva, and Villa 23 de Agosto of San Salvador de Jujuy, because of the possibility of their becoming battlefields, as well as the neighbourhoods of Cuyaya and Perales, on the outskirts of the Capital.

In the afternoon of that day, Azul forces under the command of Colonel Jorge Rafael Herrera detained an armed civilian, who was transferred to custody of the regiment. His execution without trial was announced at night:

The province of Jujuy is informed that due to the fact that a citizen was caught illegally carrying a weapon of war, this detachment commando has been forced to put him under arms without prior trial. The execution was carried out at 9:20 p.m. on the

date (Wednesday, 3er April). The affiliation of the same will be announced in due course.⁴

The name of the person shot was not recorded.

Federal Capital

To all this, the port of Buenos Aires North Dock was the scene of a feverish activity that had as its epicentre the naval units moored there. From noon, both the sailors and ground staff worked rapidly, making the final preparations to set sail. It was only at 5:00 p.m. that Marine Infantry troops and rebel troops from Palermo Regiment Nr.1 began to board, taking with them all the necessary weapons. As could be determined, around 5:30 p.m., when the troops were boarding the ships, three private cars arrived from which several people dressed in civilian clothes alighted. The unknown individuals approached the officer in charge, exchanged a few words and immediately afterwards boarded the icebreaker, to disappear inside.

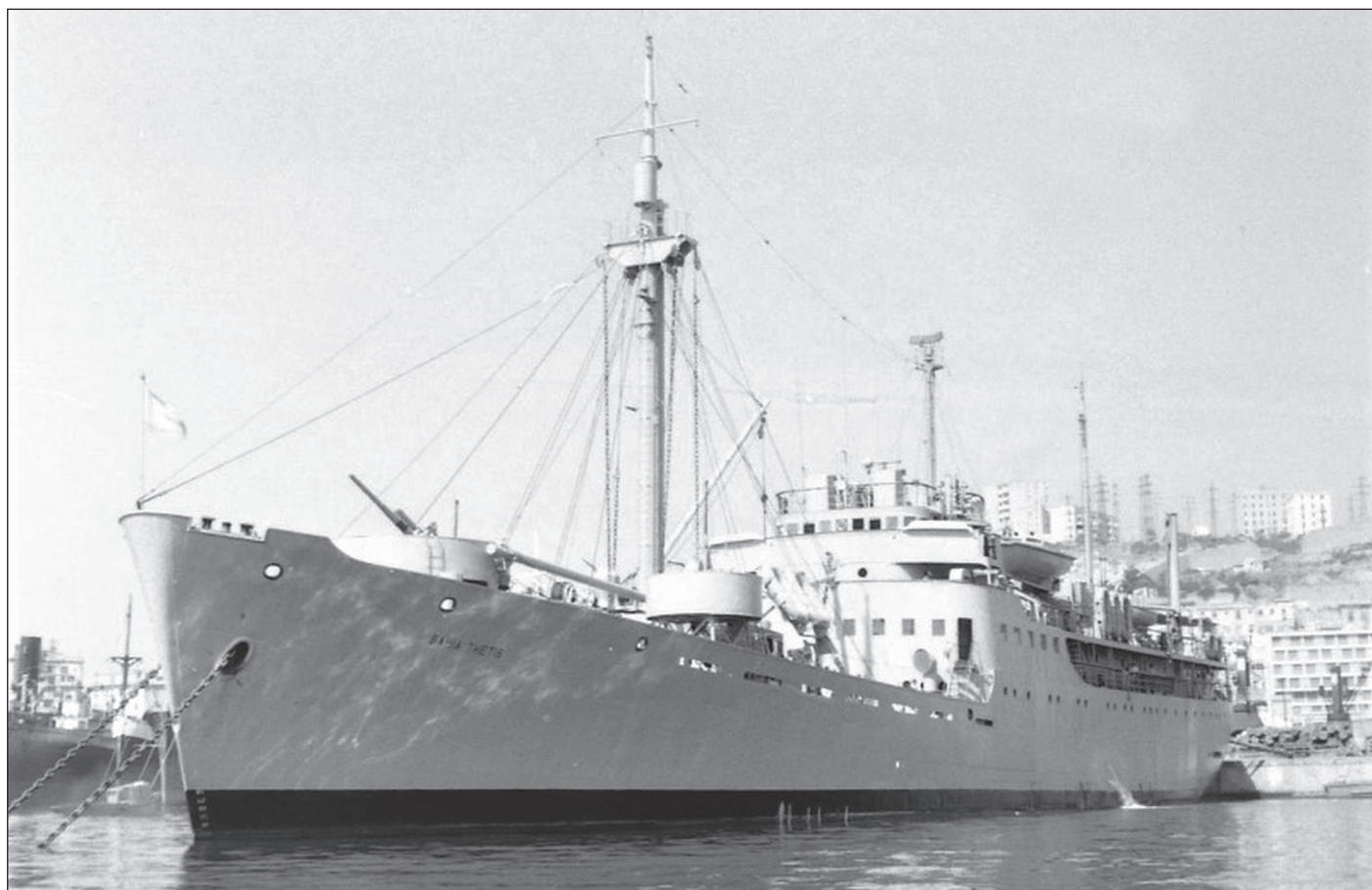
At 6:00 p.m. everything was ready and half an hour later, the boats set sail, just when the troops of the Motorised Division Nr.1 of I Army Corps under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Morales, took over the sector between Retiro and Plaza de Mayo. They did it late because at the precise moment they entered the port sector, the ships were lost on the horizon carrying, according to some versions, Admiral Rojas himself.

Morales stationed his people at crossroads, bridges and accesses, especially those of Viamonte and Córdoba, and went directly to the moorings where he hoped to find at least part of the fugitive forces. His main objective was the ARA *Bahía Thetis* where Admiral Rojas allegedly was, together with other rebellious officers, but when he arrived he found only the coast guard frigate ARA *Azopardo*, from the Naval Prefecture (Coast Guard), which was undergoing repairs, and some other empty boats moored between freighters and tankers.

Together with the transport ships, the icebreaker ARA *Gral San Martín* (Q-4) and two more other ships were carrying the 1,500 marines who had their base in the port and the rebel Army soldiers.



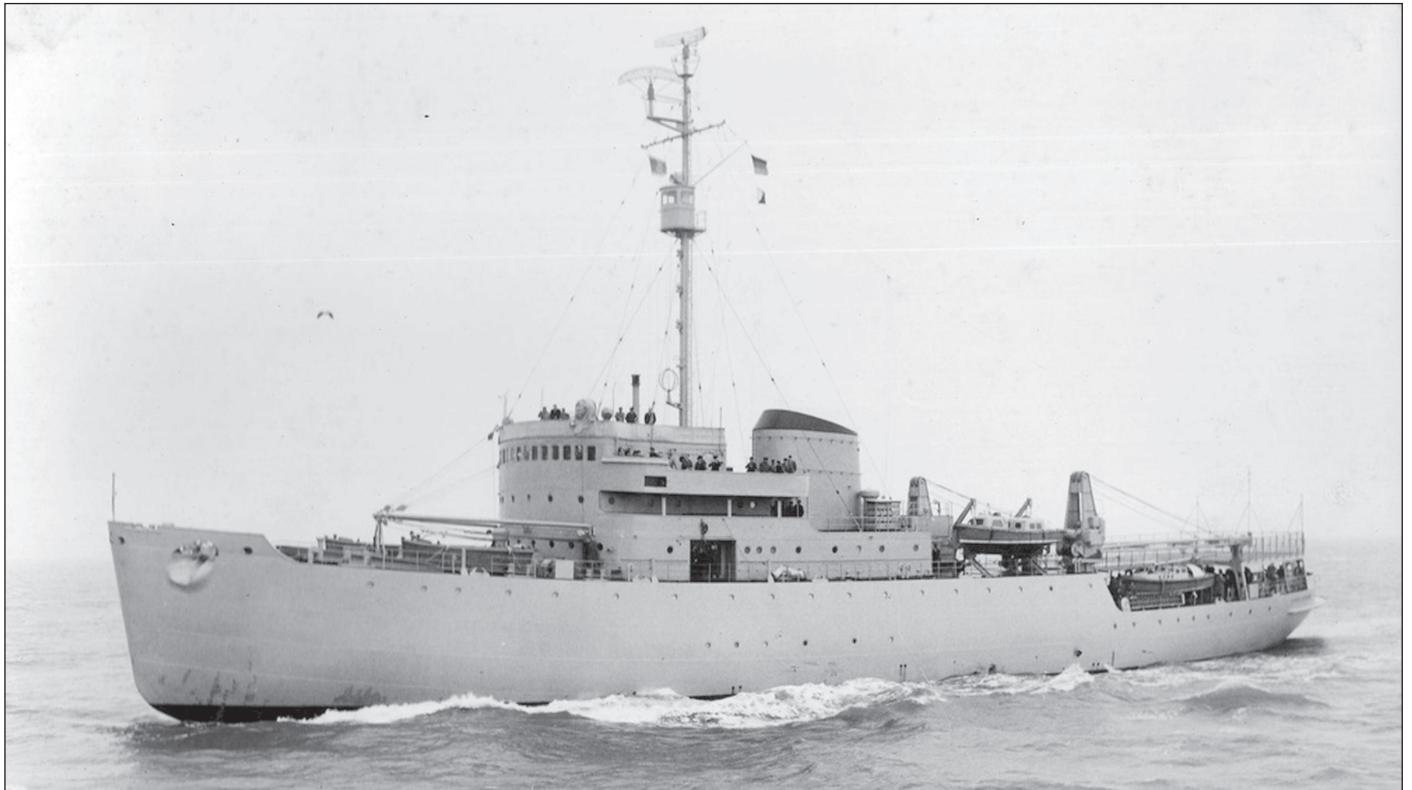
The North Dock of the Port of Buenos Aires. (Archivo General de la Nación)



The armed transport ship B-8 ARA *Bahía Thetis* of the Argentine Navy. (Histarmar Archives)



The anti-submarine frigate P-35 ARA *Azopardo* of the Argentine Navy. (Histarmar Archives)



The Argentine Navy Icebreaker Q-4 ARA *Gral. San Martín*. (Histarmar Archives)

Already in open water, the units turned east and headed towards Río Santiago, where part of the personnel they had on board had to be disembarked.

Meanwhile, on land, Morales' troops occupied the naval arsenal and the facilities of Marine Infantry Regiment Nr.1, finding both completely deserted. They found only heavy weapons, out of order communications equipment and a lot of ammunition, but in the facilities all was silence.

Heavily armed soldiers stationed themselves around the Casa de la Moneda, the Secretary of Transportation and other strategic points while carriers and trucks roamed the streets on patrol.

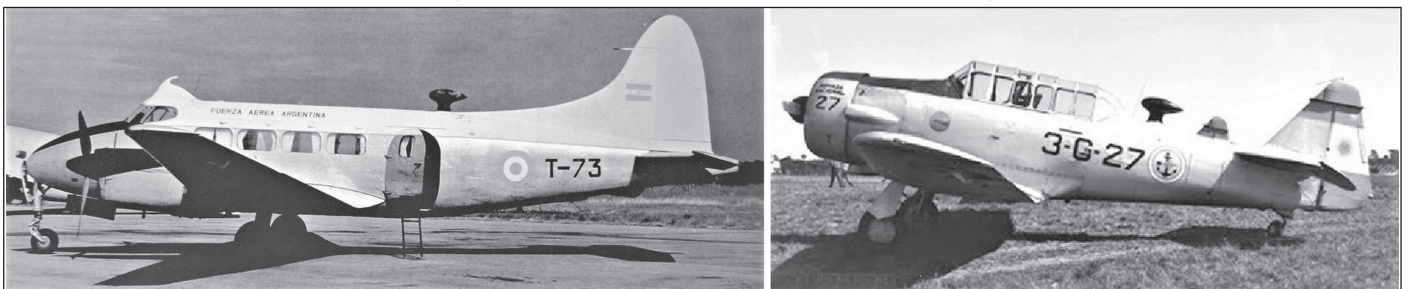
In Núñez, Battalion Nr.1 of Motorised Engineers of San Nicolás de los Arroyos led by Lieutenant Colonel Jorge Alfredo Elizagaray, occupied the Navy Mechanics School. Not far from there, on the way to the centre of the city, a strong security formation was established that surrounded the Palermo barracks (Santa Fe Avenue and Bullrich Street) and the San Martín Railroad tracks.



Azul troops arresting some Navy Marines (in dark uniforms), a common view in the last days of the 1963 uprising. (Ejército Argentino)



Lockheed P-2 Neptune serial 2-P-103 of the Argentine Naval Aviation at Carrasco International Airport in Uruguay, after its escape from Comandante Espora Base. (Nery Mendiburu)



Left, a De Havilland Dove of the Argentine Air Force, which flew to Carrasco Airport with Colorado officers to go into exile in Uruguay. Right, one of the four N.A. T-6 of the Naval Aviation that also escaped to Uruguay after the failure of the Colorado uprising. (Nery Mendiburu)

In the Naval War School, located on Tres de Febrero Street, the same was done, and also in the Horse Grenadiers Regiment, the Directorate of Military Manufacturing and the Higher Technical School of the Army. Azul troops also seized the Secretary of the Navy building, in front of the Post Office and just four blocks from Government House, finding it practically deserted. By then, several naval officers had already fled to Uruguay.

The first plane that landed in Carrasco was the Lockheed P2 Neptune serial 2-P-103. It landed on runway No.1, at 09:55, without its bombs and rockets but with 10 crew members on board. It arrived from Comandante Espora piloted by Navy Lieutenant Jorge Tarallo and Frigate Lieutenant Orlando Bolognani, it had left Comandante Espora at 08:30. Other members of the crew were Lieutenant Commander Luis César Vázquez, Second Petty Officer Carlos García, Corporals José Ibarra, Jorge Carballo, Jorge Alsogaray and Rodolfo Lezcano, and Principal Corporal Knud Christian Enudsen.

The Uruguayan authorities took charge of the situation, adopting the precautions of the case. In the first place, they proceeded to impound the aircraft, at the same time they disarmed its crew and subjected them to interrogation because, according to international treaties, they had to pronounce on their request for asylum and on the fate of the aircraft.

A second aircraft landed shortly before noon under the command of Midshipman Mario Masolo. It was the AT-6 Texan, serial 3-G-32, that carried a bomb under the right wing but its machine guns were without ammunition. Before touching down, the aircraft flew over the airport three times and finally landed at 11:55, with authorisation from the tower. After 3:00 pm, another three AT-6s landed in Uruguay, two in Carrasco and one in Laguna del Sauce, department of Maldonado. Their serial numbers were 3-G-15, 3-G-

22 and 3-G-27, under the command of Midshipmen Américo D. Vidieú and Juan Carlos Ardalla, and Lieutenant Commander Julio C. Moreno, who had participated directly in the morning's clashes.

In mid-afternoon, the planes from Punta Indio did the same, and at 7:10 p.m. a twin-engine De Havilland Dove arrived carrying Brigadier Gilberto Oliva and five other crew members, bringing the number of refugees to twenty.

4 April

In their editions of 4 April, Buenos Aires morning papers made reference to the concern with which Washington was following the Argentine military crisis. Officials close to the White House said that a civil war in Argentina could be catastrophic for the whole American Continent, especially at a time when the Kennedy administration was trying to put through the Alliance for Progress, the controversial programme of economic aid to the nations of Latin America.

Reports submitted by the US embassy to the State Department gave an account of the threatening advance of the Argentine Navy Fleet towards the Río de la Plata and its intentions to join the rebel forces that were preparing in Río Santiago. Kennedy personally studied the reports, fearful of a coup in Argentina just 48 hours after the one that had occurred in Guatemala, because it would spoil his Continental plans regarding Cuba. For the US President, Argentina and Brazil were key pieces in his alliance programme and he needed both to remain stable and, if possible, docile.

The previous week, the United States had granted credits to Argentina for 187 million dollars, destined to clean up the finances and maintain the bases of the Alliance. 'Chaos in Argentina' headlined its editorial in the *New York Herald Tribune* on 3 April;



Aerial view of the city of San Salvador de Jujuy in the 1960s. (Public Domain)



Pablo Soria Hospital in the city of Jujuy, where many soldiers wounded in combat were treated. (Public domain)

Newspapers in Madrid, France, Italy, and Germany closely followed the events, as well as in London, Canada, Brazil, Uruguay, and Chile, where the problem was given ample column space.

With the Federal Capital secured by the Azul side and the Colorado troops concentrating in the interior of the country, becoming strong in the powerful Puerto Belgrano Naval Base and other places that were still in their power, in Córdoba and Jujuy; 4 April was a crucial day, with the potential to even open a civil war.

Jujuy

During that third day of conflict there were actions in Jujuy, where troops from the Mountain Infantry Regiment Nr.20 and the Mountain Detachment Nr.2 from that province were preparing to surround the Mountain Artillery Group Nr.2, which had declared itself in favour of the revolution.

To relieve the unit, Cavalry Division Nr.5 and Artillery Division Nr.5 were dispatched from Salta, to which shortly after, at 10 a.m., the Mount Infantry School Regiment from Tartagal would be added.

On 4 April, at around 9 a.m., Cavalry Division Nr.5 was ordered to leave Parque San Martín and go to the hills of Juan Gaitán where the rebel troops had become strong. At 10 a.m. cannon fire and the clatter of machine guns shook the provincial calm, sending the inhabitants of the suburbs into a panic, and hurrying their steps trying to get away to safer places or shut themselves in their houses in search of safety and protection. The cavalry reached the aforementioned elevations when the pieces of Group 2 opened fire, forcing them to stop and seek cover.

The combat was tremendously violent, with a strong exchange of artillery and fire from heavy machine guns and small arms. It was an evenly balanced fight that ended after two hours when the Salta group withdrew towards the Capital, covered by the guns of Artillery Regiment Nr.5. Immediately afterwards, vehicles were seen speeding into the city with wounded on board, and heading to Pablo Soria Hospital.

Meanwhile, at 10:55 the Sea Fleet formally announced that it was obeying the legal orders and was returning to Puerto Belgrano while the troops from the Camet Anti-Aircraft Artillery Instruction Centre and the Mar del Plata Military Aeronautical Detachment proceeded to occupy the naval base.

After regrouping and rearming their weapons, the Cavalry Division Nr.5, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Alejandro Etcheverry Boneo, got back on the move and by mid-afternoon it positioned itself in front of the positions of the Mountain Artillery Group Nr.2, which it began to attack with intense mortar fire. The rebels tried to contain it, but when they were almost overwhelmed they withdrew to Termas de Reyes, where they had their headquarters, and once there they prepared to continue to resist. During all this, the Infantry Regiment Nr.20 remained in its cantonment, 5 kilometres from the city, waiting for the advance order that could arrive at any moment. At the same time, reinforcements were sent from Salta to support the troops surrounding the rebel regiment.

Colonel Herrera, who had been entrusted with the suppression, established a permanent link with the command of Army Division Nr.2, which in turn relayed the news to the Libertador Building and the War Secretariat, in the Federal Capital.

The arrival of the Mountain Infantry School Regiment from Tartagal was decisive. With it, it was possible to tighten the circle on the rebel garrison and hold it to its position, immobilising it completely. Mediation attempts by the Salta comptroller, engineer Pedro Félix Remy Solá, and Jujuy commissioner Dr Roberto Pomarés did not produce results. And to further add to the tension of the situation, the chief of the provincial police, Major (Ret.) Guillermo A. Giménez tendered his resignation, being temporarily replaced by the Minister of Government, Dr Diego G. Goyela. This was the situation when night came, and finding themselves surrounded and outnumbered, the rebel regiment, which until mid-

afternoon had fought tenaciously, laid down its arms and was taken prisoner by the Azul troops, who proceeded to disarm the personnel and to arrest the officers.

Córdoba

Rejected from Alta Córdoba, cadres from the Airborne Troops School commanded by Colonel Marco Aurelio Lobo headed for Jesús María, reinforced by a considerable number of civilian militiamen.

The III Corps command sent after them several detachments from the Artillery Instruction Centre led by Colonel Lablanca and Lieutenant Colonel Cánepa, who divided their forces, sending part along Route 9 and part along the Ascochinga highway, trying to close off the pass through the south to the town.

According to reports, the rebels were trying to reach the Gendarmerie Non-Commissioned Officers School in Los Nogales, less than 2 kilometres west of Jesús María, and gain a foothold there. That is why it was crucial to catch up with them because at the time the School was practically empty due to the fact that the gendarmes were in the provincial Capital patrolling the streets.

Azul troops caught up with their opponents halfway, in the vicinity of the General Paz railway station located 30 kilometres north of Córdoba, where a new confrontation took place. Seeing themselves surprised, the Colorados sought protection in the small village but their efforts were in vain. Surrounded on land and machine-gunned by Air Force aircraft, they slipped away towards Los Espinillos, disappearing into the darkness and vastness of the fields.

Around midnight, the people of Lablanca were chasing the enemy who, by then, had reached Provincial Route 74 and were heading down towards Colonia Tirollesa.

Seeing himself lost and likely to be taken prisoner, Colonel Lobo handed over command to Captain Niceto Moreno and disappeared into the night, followed by two or three men.

Cornered by superior forces, surrounded and abandoned to his fate, Moreno had no choice but to lay down his arms and surrender, a decision that he communicated to the command of the III Corps through his radio transmitter. He was ordered to go to the General



A Grenadier driver of a Mercedes Benz 170V pickup of the Argentine Army in the early 1960s. Behind, a Mercedes Benz LA4500 truck with a crew of soldiers. They all wear the Swiss helmet. (Ejército Argentino)



An IKA Jeep Model JA-3U (licence-built version of the American Willys CJ5 Jeep by Industrias Kaiser Argentina) of the Argentine Army in the 1960s. (Ejército Argentino)



A general view of the flight deck of the Argentine Navy aircraft carrier V-1 ARA *Independencia* in the early 1960s. Nine Chance-Vought F4U-5 Corsair fighters, with the two colour schemes, and five North American T-6 Texan advanced trainers can be seen on deck warming up their engines for a sortie. (E. Raczynski collection)

Paz Military High School in Córdoba and once there, make himself available to the command.

The 200 troops that made up his detachment undertook the return march and in the early morning hours they handed themselves over to Lieutenant Colonel Elizalde, who was in charge of the institution at that time. Elizalde had been arrested on the morning of 2 April at the Airborne Troops School (of which he was the Chief) and released the following day, when the legal forces reoccupied the unit.

A remnant of the Colorado detachment, made up mostly of civilian commandos, refused to surrender and went to Jesús María, where they seized its telephone company building. However, seeing that they could be surrounded, they stole several private vehicles and fled.

One dead and twenty-two wounded was the balance of the fighting in Córdoba. First Sergeant Pedro Martino of the Airborne

Troops School was killed next to the Suquía River, where First Lieutenant Héctor Rubén Vergara, Lieutenant Juan Carlos Gegenschatz, Sergeant Oscar Alfredo Balsa, 1st Corporal Sergio Ahumada and soldiers Jacinto Díaz, Luis Ramírez, Aldo González and Andrés Etcheverría were also injured, all being admitted to the Central Military Hospital.

Four other recruits, one belonging to class 41 and the remaining three to class 42, suffered various injuries during the clashes that occurred on the way to Jesús María, and were immediately evacuated to the regional hospital. Also wounded in a number of actions were Colonel Carlos Enrique Ortiz de Zárate, Sergeant Belarmino Maidana and Class 41 soldiers Inocencio Figueroa, Armando Rafael Rodríguez, José Lackpm, Patricio Sosa, Atilio Musumese and Julio César Maldonado, as well as two civilians hit by the bullets on the Centennial Bridge, Armando López and Miguel Falcón.

More than 60 civilian commandos were arrested, sentenced by military courts and imprisoned in the Viedma prison. Six months later they were amnestied and released.

Puerto Belgrano Area

While these events were taking place in Córdoba, the Navy Sea Fleet sailed back to Puerto Belgrano after announcing that it was responding to orders from loyal commanders. The

same thing happened with almost all the units of the interior, positions that they made known in two separate communiqués.

On 4 April, the Colorados enlisted the Puerto Belgrano Naval Base, under the command of Admiral Jorge Palma, to face a great battle by air, sea and land. At 6 a.m. the population of Comandante Espora Naval Air Base was evacuated and the routes leading to Punta Alta and Bahía Blanca were blocked; 40mm Bofors and 88mm Krupp guns and anti-aircraft batteries were emplaced. At 10 a.m. the naval planes started their engines waiting for the order to attack: 'the climate of war was total and the outbreak of hostilities seemed imminent.'

In the afternoon, the aircraft carrier ARA *Independencia* and the squadron of destroyers entered the roadstead. The ships stopped at the berths and proceeded to disembark their crews while the cruisers, followed by the frigate ARA *Azopardo* and the bulk of the

squadron, made their entrance. Unofficial versions reported Retired Admiral Rojas' presence at the base, as well as that of his peers, Arturo Rial, Pedro Bassi and Carlos Sampietro.

After 4:50 p.m., 400 troops from the Armoured Company Nr.1 of Olavarría commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Amadeo González Balcarce left Mar del Plata. His destination was Bahía Blanca and his mission was to recover the naval bases that remained in rebellion. The unit travelled in military trucks and requisitioned vehicles, wearing full combat equipment and with supplies for several days.

A few hours afterwards, the Campo de Mayo forces made up of 27 trucks, 13 jeeps, a bus, a van and a private car were advancing along Route 2, while their tanks were travelling by train from the Federal Capital. The column entered from the north, crossing the city in the direction of the naval base. As soon as they arrived, they were ordered to camp next to the Submarine Command and once

the bivouacs were up, the soldiers proceeded to ration and prepared to spend the night. Fifty trucks seized by the police would join them the next day, as they advanced towards Bahía Blanca.

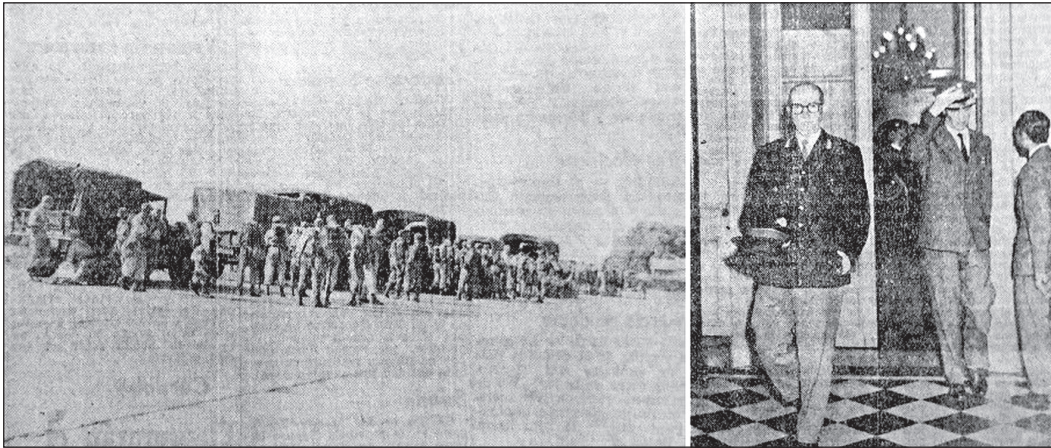
Towards afternoon, with the withdrawal of Colorado troops in Jujuy and Córdoba, as well as the surrender of the other rebel units, it became clear that the coup had failed. Defence Minister José Manuel Astigueta began talks with the Secretaries of the Army, General Benjamín Rattenbach, and of the Air Force, Brigadier Eduardo Mac Loughlin, to assess what the conditions were, which turned out to be very moderate, without requiring base closures or loss of naval aviation, which would have humiliated the Navy.

But when everything seemed to be heading towards a ceasefire and an end of military operations, General Onganía opposed the conditions set for the surrender and decided to continue the movement towards Puerto Belgrano, disobeying Rattenbach.

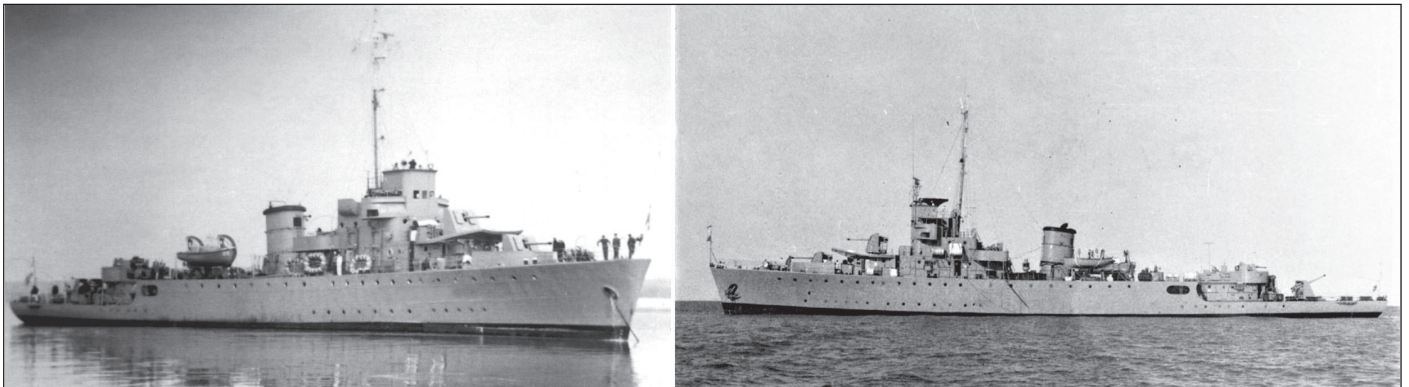
Onganía wanted the agreement to include a reduction in the military capacity of the Navy. Overnight Guido managed to convince Onganía, and the way was left open to formalise the surrender of the Colorados.

Mar del Plata

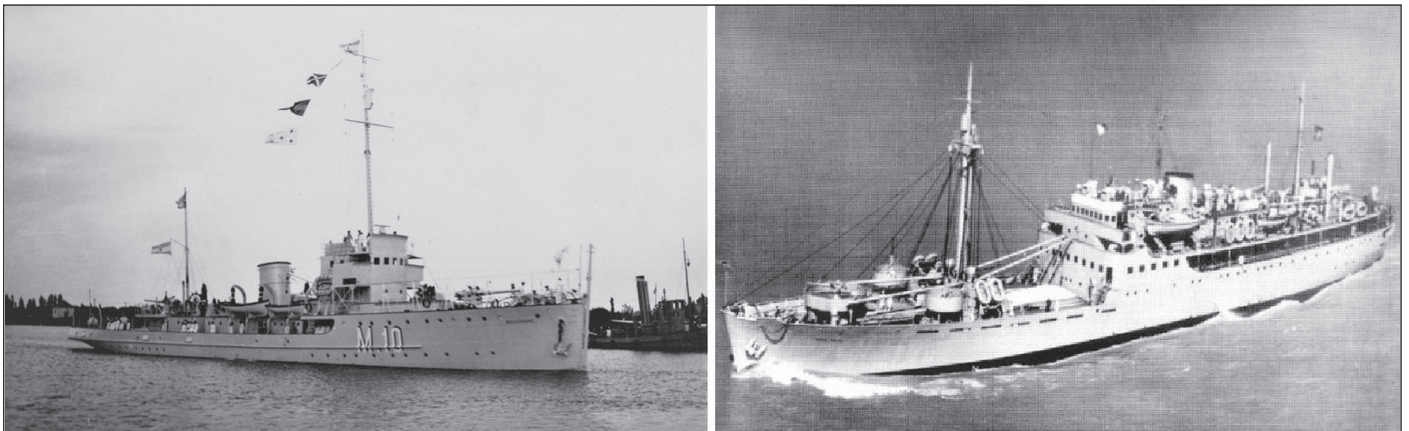
Through the morning of 4 April, the population near the port and the naval base of Mar del Plata experienced hours of anxiety. Despite the fact that the Army units had announced their loyalty to their formal commanders, the attitude of the Navy remained an enigma and



On the left, Azul troops from the towns of Tandil, Azul and Olavarría garrisons halt their advance towards Mar del Plata first and then Bahía Blanca. (Diario La Nación) On the right, the Secretary of the Army General Rattenbach and the Secretary of the Air Force Brigadier Mac Loughlin in the Casa Rosada. (Diario La Razón)



The Argentine Navy patrol boats P-21 ARA King (left) and P-20 ARA Murature (right). (Histarmar Archives)



The Argentine Navy Minesweeper M-10 ARA Py (left) and the armed transport boat ARA Bahía Thetis (right). (Histarmar Archives)

kept the repression command on alert. The city knew what war was, especially the neighbourhoods adjacent to the points mentioned because in September 1955 the Sea Fleet had bombed the port sector to destroy the large fuel tanks that the YPF company (Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales, the Argentine Petrol Company) had there. There was also a fight in the naval cantonment, on the other side of the urban area, which was shelled from the sea. The bombardment was still fresh in the memory of the population, especially since some shells had fallen in the neighbourhood, damaging homes and businesses. On that occasion, the neighbourhood had to abandon their homes and flee at night, in the freezing rain.

Seven years later, history was repeating itself and for that reason, the neighbourhood inhabitants were preparing to leave the area again. The exhortations made by the authorities calling for calm were of no use; the presence of ships off the coast was a fact and the outbreak of hostilities was immanent. After 2 a.m., the families left their homes and moved inland with their children, the elderly, the sick, and whatever belongings they could carry. It seemed like an exact copy of what had happened in 1955. Panic became general and not even the staff of the 3rd police station, who went out to control the streets, could contain the crowd.

The security guards asked everyone to remain calm, assuring them that there was not going to be a bombing, but the people insisted that according to the radio, it was going to start at 07:45.

The situation took on greater drama when at 8 a.m., three aircraft flew over the port area, but left without carrying out any attacks. When they lost their way to the southwest, the fears dissipated, at least for the moment, but the people preferred to wait a while before returning.

The warships that had entered the stations were the patrol boats ARA *Murature* and ARA *King* and the minesweepers ARA *Seaver* and ARA *Py*. Behind them, at 02:30, came the ARA *Bahía Thetis* from which, according to reports, Admiral Rojas had disembarked. The ship moored at the overseas dock and began to refuel, an operation in which it was busy when two green buses full of conscripts stopped next to it. Following orders, the recruits got off and proceeded to board, ascending the ramps slowly with their weapons in their hands and backpacks on their backs. After the operation, the order came to weigh anchor and an hour later, the five units went out to the open sea looking for the bulk of the squad.

By then, the naval base presented a bleak aspect, with its guns covered, the launches moored at the docks, and very few personnel moving around within its perimeter.

The planes that flew over the area and that had generated so much uncertainty among the population during the early hours of the morning were two Morane-Saulnier M.S.760 Paris and a North American F-86F Sabre fighter that, passing low, made the sirens of the naval base sound for several minutes.

That day, the fishing boats did not go to sea because of the risk that this implied. The stores remained with their shutters down, the fish sales stalls were closed, the staff of public agencies were given a day's holiday and only two filleting establishments dared to open.

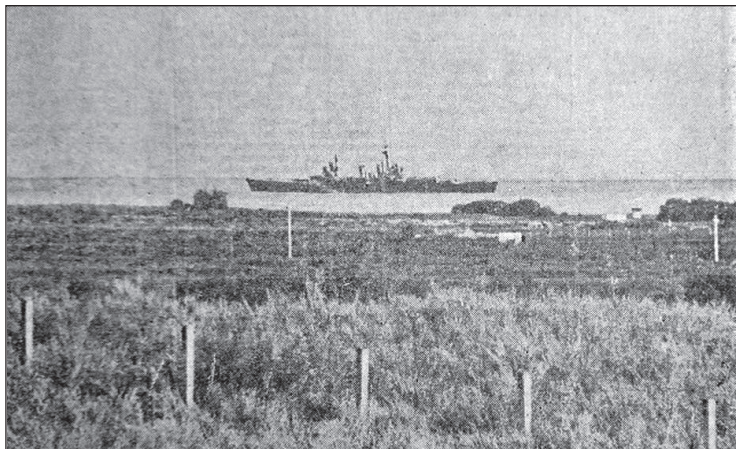
Buenos Aires

In the Federal Capital, members of the Navy Mechanics School (ESMA), under the command of Captain Poggi, occupied the Naval Electronic Department in the Palermo neighbourhood, a spacious property framed by Malabia, Gutiérrez, Ugarteche and Cabello streets. Since 8:55 p.m. the day before, soldiers armed with machine guns had kept a close watch and did not allow anyone to approach the building or park nearby.

In Lomas de Zamora, personnel from the regional unit of the Investigation Brigade detained numerous civilian commandos and took them to the 1st Police station in Lanús. Journalists who tried to approach the station were kept at a distance and prevented from speaking with the detained civilians because, it was explained, they were held at the disposal of military justice. When they were transferred to the mobile truck that was to take them to the courts, the reporters managed to see Juan Fernando Natero, director of the local newspaper *El Herald*, his son Iván and Jorge Audino, the three UCR militants.

By then, the Navy had understood that the situation was critical and that to avoid disaster it needed to reach an agreement. Faced with this state of affairs, Admiral Palma established contact with the revolutionary command and after a strong exchange of words, agreed to dialogue with the government. The Minister of Defence, in charge of the Secretary of the Navy, José Manuel Astigueta, was the link.

When Astigueta answered the phone, he was solicitous and after a long conversation, he promised to speak with the heads of the other two arms and report the news to the Nation's President. As soon as he hung up, he called General Rattenbach and told him what had just happened. He accepted the proposal and said that he was open to dialogue, as was Brigadier Eduardo Mac Loughlin, both of whom were eager to put an end to hostilities. When General Onganía found out, he gathered his closest collaborators and informed them what was happening while Astigueta did the same with Guido.



Left, the Argentine Navy's Sea Fleet begins to arrive at Puerto Belgrano. The heavy cruiser ARA *Nueve de Julio* can be seen in the distance. Right, Brigadier General Lanusse answering questions from the press at the Buenos Aires Aeroparque before departing back to Punta Indio after his meeting with Lt. Gen. Onganía. (Diario La Nación)

One of the conditions imposed by the Army was that the Sea Fleet enter the port and that all Navy personnel concentrate in their units. The Naval Aviation had to immediately stop operations and the rebel radios, especially those in Mar del Plata and Puerto Belgrano, must stop transmitting. A naval officer whose authority was not compromised would be in charge of endorsing the agreement and for this he had to put his honour at risk, a point that no one objected to. The Navy would be respected as an institution and only those who had taken part in the uprising would be punished. It was only then that Admiral Vázquez boarded a plane and travelled to Buenos Aires to speak directly with Astigueta and Rattenbach.

At first, General Onganía refused to abide by what was agreed and ordered the occupation of Mar del Plata naval base even though he had given up his position. At 6:35 p.m. he met with President Guido and General Rattenbach and 15 minutes later he left accompanied by the latter, after agreeing to respect the decision set out by the government.

As soon as the high-ranking Army officers left the seat of government, the President was informed that Rear Admiral Jorge Julio Palma and Admiral Guillermo Pérez Pitón, commander of the Marine Corps, had just turned themselves in.

5 April

In the early hours of 5 April, the foundations for a solution to the conflict were laid. The announcement was made at 2:45 a.m., once the emergency meeting that took place at the Ministry of Defence in the last hours of the previous day had ended, which was attended by the three military secretaries, Rear Admiral Eladio Vázquez and civil and military officials, all urged the reaching of a solution.

The communiqué issued after the meeting stated that the prerequisites for the cessation of operations were agreed upon, including the arrest and trial of the rebel leaders according to their different hierarchies, the constitution of the courts that would be in charge of the trials, the reduction of the Naval Aviation and the Marine Infantry Corps, as well as the occupation of Punta Indio base by the C-8 Tank Regiment until the reconstruction of their barracks was completed, and finally the restitution within a reasonable period of time of the army bases then under the jurisdiction of the Army to the new commanders to be designated.

As soon as the agreement was reached, the head of the Ministry of Defence contacted President Guido to update him. As General Onganía was also informed, he did the same with his staff and immediately ordered the halt of the advance of the troops that were heading south at that time. Until further notice, the units that converged on Puerto Belgrano should not pass the General Roca line of the Colorado River, Pedro Luro, Algarrobo, Laguna Cochicó,

López Lecube, Tornquist, Peralta, Coronel Pringles, Coronel Dorrego and Balneario Monte Hermoso.

That Friday, 5 April, the Nation woke up to calm. Classes resumed in educational establishments, there was activity in banks and the stock markets, and shops opened their doors like every other day. However, disturbing news was coming from the interior of the country. Some regiments continued to advance, other units began preparations and there was talk of confused situations in various provinces.

In the early hours of the morning, minutes before the government announced the basis of the agreement, five non-commissioned officers arrived at the house of Lieutenant Colonel Horacio Guglielmone, in the barracks of the Jujuy Mountain Artillery Regiment Nr.2, and at gunpoint disarmed the guards stationed around the property to free him. After again placing themselves under his orders, another 10 men joined, followed by a considerable part of the troops, at the head of which Guglielmone prepared to regain control. They had a howitzer, two machine guns, automatic weapons and machine guns. Upon arrival at the command headquarters, there were some struggles and some shots were fired, but fortunately things did not escalate. The unit was calmed and the rebel officers arrested, with Lieutenant Colonel Urbano de la Vega at the head. It was the last action of the military crisis.

The same morning, troops marching south from Rosario stopped their advance; IV Air Brigade and VIII Infantry Division of Mendoza suspended their enlistment. III Air Defence Artillery Group remained expectant in the concentration zone that had been assigned to it in San Luis and from Villa Reynolds, Commodore Carlos A. Lori, chief of the V Air Brigade, announced that he had no news regarding the mobilising his unit.

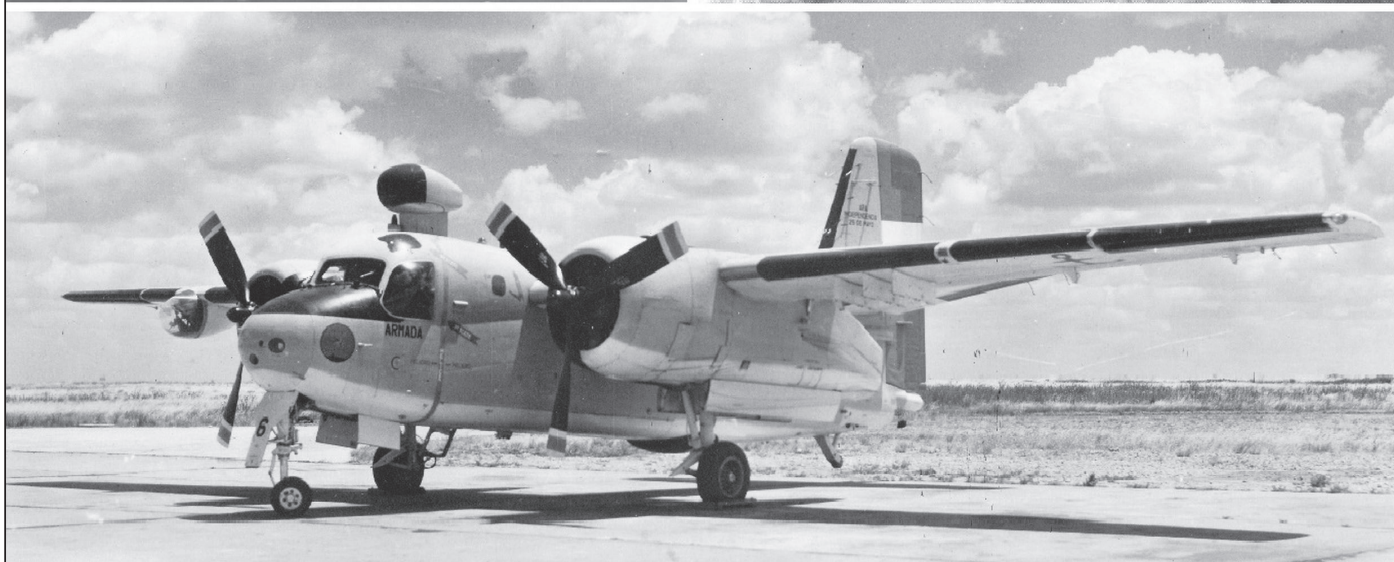
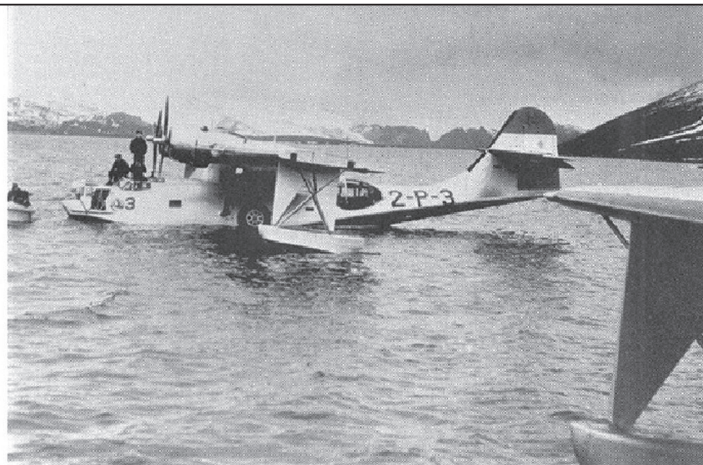
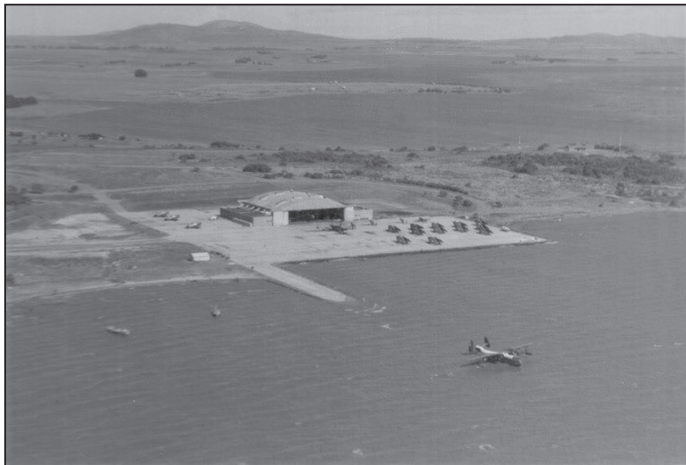
Calm also settled in Corrientes despite the fact that late on 4 April, a small group of officers from the Paso de los Libres Infantry, Artillery and Engineer regiments had rebelled. Fortunately, things did not go far and after a series of negotiations, the situation was brought under control.

In the province of Buenos Aires, 3,000 troops from Campo de Mayo, Tandil and Azul concentrated in Balcarce under the command of General Pascual Pistarini, who arrived late in the afternoon, he had been preceded by Colonel Julio Mosquera, who arrived by helicopter at 4 p.m.

Meanwhile, exiles continued to arrive in Montevideo. During the morning, the Naval Aviation Douglas C-47A serial CTA-20 landed in Carrasco carrying 10 other officers on board. Once on the ground, the inspector of the Uruguayan Air Force, Brigadier Conrado A. Sáez, appeared before them, and they requested asylum. The ten were: were Rear Admirals Carlos Sampietro and Juan Carlos Bassi,



Left, the passenger terminal of the Carrasco International Airport, near Montevideo, Uruguay. (Public domain). Right, the Naval Aviation Douglas C-47A serial CTA-20, which transported 10 Argentine naval officers into exile in Uruguay (right). (Aviación Naval Argentina)



Upper left, Capitán de Corbeta Carlos Curbelo base of the Uruguayan Naval Aviation in Laguna de Sauce (ANU). Upper right, The Boeing Canada PB2B-1 Canso serial 2-P-3 (later 3-G-3) that transported several Argentine naval officers into exile in Uruguay. (Histarmar Archives). Below, a Grumman S-2A Tracker of the Argentine Naval Aviation. (E. Raczynski collection).

Navy Captains Luis Martín, Jorge Bassi and José Giliberti; Frigate Captains Alberto Garibaldi and Carlos Hurtado and Corvette Captains Arturo Ambrosini, Alberto Martínez and Jorge Carel who, in accordance with established protocols, were all detained and held in the barracks.

At midday, the Naval Aviation Grumman S2A Tracker, serial 2-G-14, crewed by Lieutenant Commander Jorge Colet, accompanied by Midshipmen Machado and Wilkinson, landed in Laguna del Sauce, and at midnight the Boeing Canada PB2B-1 Canso serial 0261/3-G-3, piloted by Lieutenant Commander Julio Rodríguez who brought with him Lieutenant Commanders Rafael Serra, James Wahmond and Edgardo Aguirre, Lieutenants Héctor Correa and Jorge Simian and Frigate Lieutenants Juan Pochard, Guillermo Tortorelli, Julio Pioletti and Fausto López. The aircraft arrived with its full load of bombs and that forced the Uruguayan military authorities to adopt security measures, putting it under strict surveillance and prohibiting access to anyone who did not have the proper authorisation. A Uruguayan Air Force truck took the newcomers to their accommodation in Laguna del Sauce, where there were already five other Argentine Navy officers, they would be joined in the following days by twenty-nine more Navy officers.

Eight Argentine Army officers crossed into Chile on 3 April. They did so in the area of Temuco, a commune in the province of Cautín, in the region of Araucanía, where they were incarcerated in a local base. The eight were; Captain Héctor Mackinlay, Lieutenants Eduardo Rivas, Enzo Rivas Micco, Humberto Moranduzzo, Pedro

Schlemone and Oscar Alberti, and Second Lieutenants Rodolfo Varela and Enrique Villagrán.

Four other officers, in this case from the Infantry Regiment Nr.24 of Río Gallegos, went to Puerto Natales; these were Luis Ernesto Mojoli, Luis Eulogio Soto, Julio Arturo Carol and Jorge Luis Borger.

In Córdoba, the police, acting subject to military authority, raided the homes of the members of the Mayo Association, an entity founded between September and October 1955 at the time of the *Revolucion Libertadora*, and accused of having provided the greatest amount of civilian commandos during the crisis. General Carlos Roberto Moore, commander of the III Army Corps, followed all of these movements closely, assisted by his second in command, Colonel Roberto G. Fonseca.

Meanwhile, in Buenos Aires, the meetings between President Guido, Officials and Officers of the three arms continued. The appointment of Rear Admiral Eladio M. Vázquez as commander of the Naval Base of Puerto Belgrano came from them, who once notified, moved to the Aeroparque to fly back to Bahía Blanca. That day all deployed Air Force aircraft returned to their original bases.

At 11:30 p.m. on 5 April, Rear Admirals J. López and Mario Lanzarini, the latter director of the National War College, who were in the company of Captains Aldo R. Molinari and Nestor Noriega, surrendered to the Infantry Regiment Nr.5 of Puerto Belgrano, provisional headquarters of the command of V Army Corps. Other officers did the same, including Frigate Captain Daniel Alfredo Sánchez Nemesio, of the Marine Corps.

6 April

On the night of Saturday 6 April, train No 44 departed from Bariloche for Buenos Aires (Plaza Constitución) to pick up members of Palermo Regiment Nr.1 (commanded by Major González) in Bahía Blanca, who were detained in the facilities of the Infantry Regiment Nr.5 after disembarking in Puerto Belgrano to join the uprising.

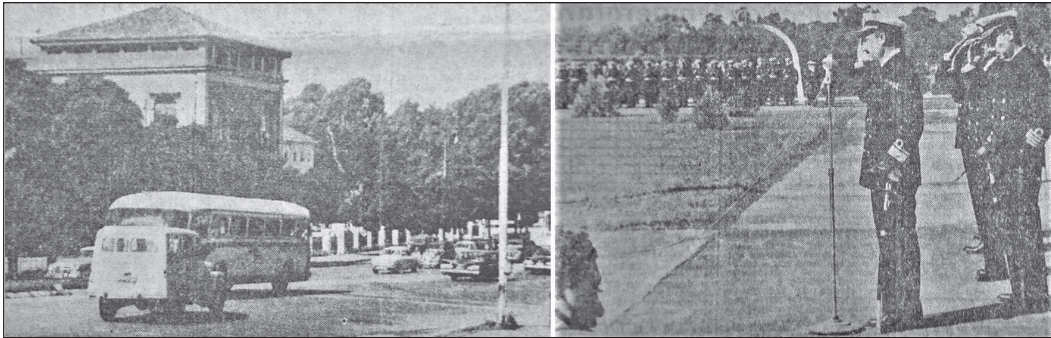
#As soon as he arrived at the large naval base in the south, Rear Admiral Vázquez took over his new functions, a novel situation that he made known through a statement bearing the signature of the Navy Captain Rafael A. Palomeque, head of the Public Relations Department. of the Navy and veteran of the *Revolucion Libertadora*.

During the course of the day, General Lanusse held a lengthy meeting with General Onganía in which issues related to the

crisis and the future of the Army in the face of national politics were discussed. He arrived at the Aeroparque from Punta Indio at 11:40 a.m., aboard Army Aviation Douglas C-47B serial AE-12E, accompanied by the second chief of the C-10, Colonel Roberto Rovere, and officers from his General Staff. From there, he moved to the Libertador Building where he arrived at 12:00, remaining in a meeting until 5:40 p.m., and when he left the Commander-in-Chief's office, he agreed to speak with the press. Back at the air station, he had a brief meeting in his waiting room with four officers (two colonels and two majors) and at 6:15 p.m. he left for Punta Indio on the same plane that had brought him.

In La Plata, life returned to normal. However, in the headquarters of the Communications Battalion Nr.2 of City Bell it was necessary to deactivate a bomb and detonate another, both dropped by the

Naval Aviation aircraft on the night of 2 April. The first was 150 metres from the main building and the second 20 metres from gate No.1, in front of Camino Centenario. An Air Force team was present at noon to deactivate the first device, 50 kilograms of TNT that represented a potential danger to personnel and facilities. The work was done very slowly, with the caution that such an operation requires, and after two hours it was successfully completed. As the second projectile had been left in a compromised position, it was decided to detonate it. The first thing that was arranged after the corresponding visual inspection was to surround it with a parapet of rammed earth one metre high and a half a metre thick, intended to cushion the blast and reduce the risk of splinters. Vehicular traffic on the Centennial Road was then stopped and a small explosive charge was placed on



Left, a bus on Libertador Avenue in Buenos Aires transports naval chiefs involved in the uprising, who had been detained in Bahía Blanca, to their prison at the Navy Mechanics School (ESMA), which can be seen in the photo. (Diario La Prensa). Right, Rear Admiral Eladio Vázquez (centre, by the microphone) assumes command of Puerto Belgrano. Shortly after, President Guido would appoint him Commander-in-Chief of the Navy. (Diario La Nación)



Left, Brigadier General Alejandro Agustín Lanusse. Right, Lieutenant General Juan Carlos Onganía. (Public Domain)



The Douglas C-47B serial AE-12E of the Argentine Army. (Cicales-Raczynski collection)

the bomb's casing, which in turn was connected to a generator by means of an electric cable. At 1:30 p.m. the operators made contact and the bomb exploded violently, shaking adjacent buildings and raising a considerable column of smoke and earth. The detonation left a crater half a metre deep, but did not cause damage to the facilities.

The same day, three other planes landed in Carrasco with twenty-three officers on board, including Captain Jorge Bassi, Commodore Osvaldo R. Lentino, Colorado commander of the Air Force, and Vice Commodore Luis Emilio Bianchini, they took refuge in the Uruguayan embassy, located at 1392 Arenales street, while a significant number of officers chose to flee and get lost in the chaos.

Triumph of "the Violets"

After the surrender of the Colorado command, President José María Guido appointed Brigadier General Juan Carlos Onganía as Commander-in-Chief of the Army. But the Azules lacked a clear political project and could not find a suitable solution. Their proposal was to call for elections, with the participation of Peronists, and submit to civilian rule, but they never found the civilian interlocutors to carry out that proposal, because Frondizi was in

prison and Perón obviously would not accept it. The triumphant Azul military, on the other hand, distrusted the Peronist-Frondizista front that was pushing Solano Lima as a candidate and demanding that Guido prevent it. This rapprochement with the anti-Peronist Colorado positions earned them the nickname *Violetas* (Violets). Commanded by Generals Julio Alsogaray, Alejandro Agustín Lanusse and Tomás Sánchez de Bustamante, they achieved the resignation of the Minister of the Interior, Rodolfo Martínez, imposing in his place firstly General Enrique Rauch, and afterwards General Osiris Villegas.

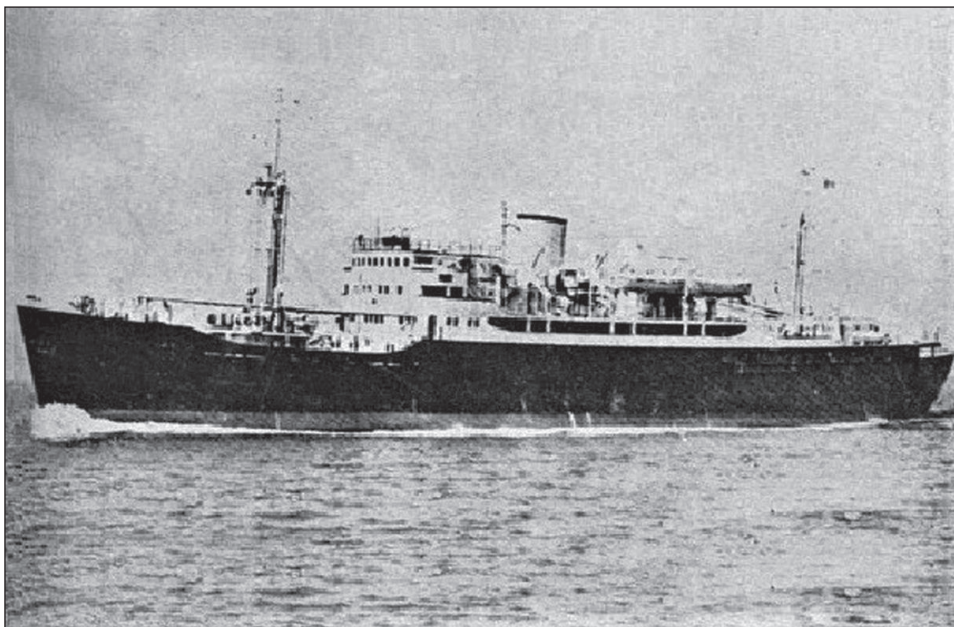
The result was the banning of Peronism and Frondizismo and therefore, they ended up doing what the Colorados proposed, enabling the electoral victory of the "radicals of the people", with the candidacy of Dr Illia, a politician familiar with the Colorado segments of the Navy.

One of the main leaders of the Córdoba civil commands of the Colorado side, the radical Medardo Ávila Vázquez, considered that the Colorado uprising of April 1963 'served to break the front that Peronists and Frondicistas were arming.' In this way, the Colorado army that had harassed Frondizi for four years was replaced by the Azul Army, which gave power to the political party of the Colorados.

EPILOGUE

On the afternoon of 6 April, the national authorities detained retired Admiral Isaac F. Rojas. The controversial retired Navy officer was taken from his home at 1728 Austria Street to the Central Police Department, heavily guarded by the Security Guard. He left the building wearing his uniform, with the idea of turning himself in at ESMA, but the police forces had beaten him to it. His arrest ended the uprising. Previously, two trucks with members of the Infantry Guard and a pair of Federal Police Security stopped in Austria Street and Santa Fe Avenue to cut off traffic and establish checkpoints with a radius of several blocks. When Rojas went out into the street it was 7:45 p.m., he was accompanied by several people dressed in civilian clothes, including Commissioner Miguel Rossi of the 21st Police

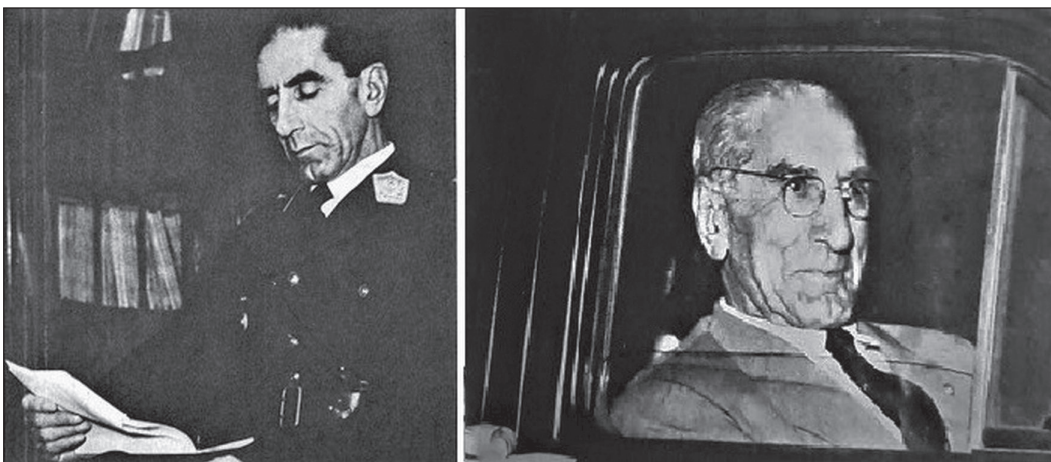
Station and Deputy Commissioner Jorge R. Monetta. Rojas got into a police car and left escorted by one of the trucks. A service agent was kept at the door of his house and some patrol cars remained stationed nearby. Upon arriving at the Police Department, the Admiral was taken directly to the office of Colonel Carlos Alberto Muzio. After a very long interrogation, at around 10 p.m., the Admiral was taken to Dock A of the port of Buenos Aires. Once there, Rojas was handed over to naval personnel and taken on board the Argentine Navy transport ship B-12 ARA *Les Eclaireurs*. Although he was accused of being the ringleader of the coup, his participation was only symbolic. The versions that he was actively participating aboard naval units in operations were false. As far as Admiral Rojas is concerned, he was



After a long interrogation, Admiral Isaac Rojas was taken to the Argentine Navy transport ship B-12 ARA *Les Eclaireurs*, anchored in the port of Buenos Aires. (Histarmar Archives)



Left, retired Admiral Isaac Rojas, with his wife and daughter, walk to the aircraft that would take him to his exile on Martín García Island. Right, Admiral Rojas being greeted by an admirer. (Public domain).



Left, General Benjamín Menéndez when he was an active Army officer. Right, the elderly General Menéndez in 1963. (Public Domain)

subjected to a legal process by a court-martial, convicted and confined under arrest on the island of Martín García.

With the resignations of Admirals Carlos Garzoni and Enrique Grünwaldt, Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Eladio Vázquez became Commander-in-Chief of the Navy. On 6 April, Rear Admiral Carlos A. Kolungia, who had already held the post after the 1962 crisis, was sworn in as Secretary of the Navy. In the morning hours, the Chief of the Naval Aviation Staff, Frigate

Captain Eduardo Trejo Lema requested asylum at the Paraguayan embassy in Buenos Aires.

As a consequence of the second confrontation between the Azules and the Colorados, the influence of the Navy in the political process entered a shadow for more than a decade. To the cuts established for the marine infantry and on the naval aviation, was added the 'beheading' of almost the entire admiralty. The uprising of the Navy had been totally useless and destroyed the discipline and unity of the arm.

On Sunday 7 April, Communiqué No.200 was issued with the signature of General Onganía, reiterating the ideals of freedom and the full validity of the Constitution in the face of attempts to impose a dictatorship.

Three days later, Brigadier General Enrique Rauch took office as Minister of the Interior, a position vacant since the resignation of Dr Rodolfo Martínez Jr.

The balance of the uprising was 24 dead and 87 wounded, in addition to high costs in equipment and military installations, not counting the homes and private buildings damaged in the actions. General Benjamín Menéndez refused to leave the country and disappeared from public view for a long time.

That the causes of that crisis were a bid between the high military chiefs and not the participation of Peronism in public life is proved by communiqué 187 in which Onganía confirmed the banning of that regime. Three years later, the same general who had led the victorious Azul forces, brandishing respect for democratic



Brigadier General Enrique Rauch is sworn in as Minister of the Interior of the government of President Guido on 10 April 1963. (Diario La Prensa)

institutions as a motto, staged a coup that catapulted him to power. His Government was good, excellent in many respects, but extremely conservative, authoritarian and personal. However, the most significant thing is that he was more Colorado than the most Colorado of all Colorados, that is, stricter and more extreme than those he fought against on the battlefield.

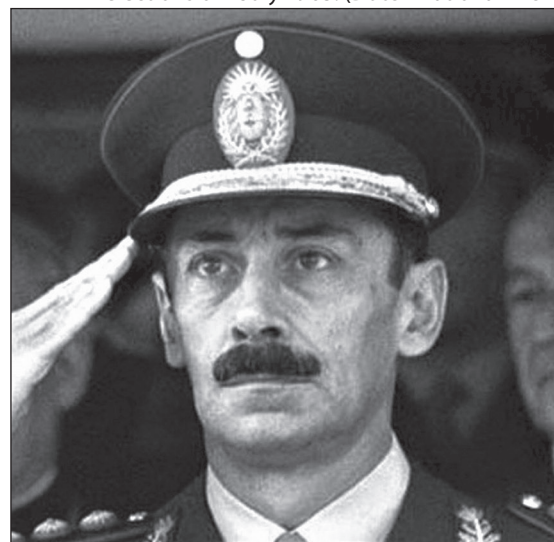
The evidence was conclusive: Peronism continued to be banned, its leader remained in exile, and his supporters were barred from power for the next decade.

Trials, Convictions, Amnesty and Purge

The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces was in charge of the trials of the rebel soldiers, some 300 in total, of which 190 belonged to the Army, 80 to the Navy and 30 to the Air Force. Another 80 who did not appear in court were discharged and after five months, sentences ranging from eight and nine years to four years and two months in prison were handed down. The civilians who participated in the struggle were prosecuted by the corresponding civil courts, while nearly 60 defendants were acquitted.



Dr Arturo Humberto Illia, candidate of the Unión Cívica Radical del Pueblo (UCRP) was the winner of the elections of 7 July 1963. (Dutch National Archives)



The then Army Lieutenant Colonels Jorge Rafael Videla and Roberto Eduardo Viola, who had joined the Colorado side. They saved their military careers and would become de facto Presidents of Argentina, Videla from 1976 to 1981 and Viola in 1981. (Public Domain)

The April uprising was immediately brought to trial before the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (CONSUGA), the highest military court in times of peace, in charge of judging superior officers in a single instance according to the legislation in force at that time. In the first investigation of the events, the CONSUGA attorney general charged 292 officers, of whom 181 were from the Army, 76 from the Navy, 27 from the Air Force, and 8 from the National Gendarmerie. Of these, 80 soldiers fled. Ultimately, 196 officers were prosecuted, and sentence was handed down on 12 September 1963, with the following result:

- 2 admirals received the maximum sentences, with prison sentences of nine and eight years respectively, plus loss of military status
- 77 officers were sentenced to prison terms of between two months and four years, with loss of military status
- 60 officers received minor sentences, without loss of military status;
- 57 officers were acquitted.

On the same day as the sentences were announced, President José María Guido, in exercise of the legislative powers that he had taken de facto, decreed an amnesty that annulled the sentences and returned the military rank to all the rebels, including those who had fled.

The amnesty did not prevent the triumphant Azules from carrying out extensive purges in the Armed Forces. Immediately after the surrender of the Colorado side, President Guido issued Decree-Law Nr.2652 of 9 April 1963, authorising the secretaries of each of the forces to put aside the military regulations referring to dismissals, retirements, appointments, closing and opening of units, et cetera. In the Army, 225 officers were discharged. Two officers, who would later have historical importance, managed to avoid discharge despite having joined the Colorado side: Lieutenant Colonels Jorge Rafael Videla and Roberto Viola, both later de facto Presidents of Argentina. In summary, the army purges of 1962 and 1963 affected 412 officers, more than half of them from the infantry and only a few from the cavalry.

In the Navy the purge was greater; 90 percent of the admirals and 40 percent of the naval captains lost their positions, and the force was significantly reduced, and for the first time since the *Revolucion Libertadora*, ceased to be a major political force.

The Question of the Dead and Wounded

Most sources take it for granted that 24 deaths and 87 injuries occurred in the confrontations between Azules and Colorados. These numbers were taken directly from the Archive of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (CONSUGA), legacy 30, pages 6069-6076 for Army casualties, and file 21, pages 4090-4098, for Navy casualties, while the file corresponding to the Air Force (file 9, page 1800) does not record any casualties for the Force. All the casualties



Presidential inauguration of Dr Arturo Illia on 12 October 1963. From left to right, President Illia, Admiral Benigno Varela and Lieutenant General Juan Carlos Onganía. (Archivo General de la Nación)

were military, and of them 19 dead belonged to the Army, while the dead of the Navy numbered 5, all marines.

The names of the 24 dead combatants and the 87 wounded are partially known, but they are not remembered in any public acts or any memorial plaques, with the exception of the 'Ex-Combatants Group of 2 April 1963'; nor have they been included in any of the multiple laws or bills that have been prepared to compensate the victims of acts of political violence which happened between 1955 and 1983.

In some cases, it has been stated that the numbers of dead and wounded were higher, even some civilian casualties are mentioned. In fact, at least 4 civilians were killed on a train that was strafed by two Air Force Gloster Meteors on 21 September 1962. On 3 April 1963, a horse-drawn carriage hit a mine near the Punta Indio Air Naval Base, serious wounding its conductor, whose legs were later amputated. There were also some civilians who were wounded by bullets and shrapnel in Alta Córdoba. Besides these, there was an

execution without trial of a detained civilian in Jujuy on 3 April 1963 and some days later, an 18-year-old boy in Villa San Carlos, district of Berisso, was seriously wounded when trying to disarm a 20mm round that fell in Los Talas, and had detached from one of the Grumman Panther fighter-bombers.

Beyond the difficulties of the Azules in finding a legal solution, their victory in April 1963 ended the indiscipline within the Armed Forces that had been generated by the *Revolucion Libertadora*, to start, 'a decade of order within

the Army during which it was dominated by a homogeneous group of superior officers, most of whom shared a common past of anti-Peronist struggles.'¹

Presidential Elections

Calm returned and three months later, on Sunday 7 July, presidential elections were held in which the centrist UCRP candidate Dr Arturo Umberto Illia won with 31.90 percent of the votes out of a total of 9,710,116 votes cast. The UCRI candidate Dr Oscar Alende took second position with 20.82 percent of the votes cast and the third place went to the retired General Pedro E. Aramburu with 17.81 percent of the votes. Once again Peronist candidates were not allowed to participate.

Three years later, on 28 June 1966, the 'legalist' and leader of the Azules, General Onganía, would overthrow the then-President Arturo Illia, in a process that was called the 'Argentine Revolution.'



Presidents of Argentina between 1966 and 1983.

From left to right (top row), Lieutenant General Juan Carlos Onganía (1966–1970), Brigadier General Roberto Marcelo Levingston (1970–1971), Lieutenant General Alejandro Agustín Lanusse (1971–1973), Dr Héctor Cámpora (1973), Raúl Alberto Lastiri (1973) and Lieutenant General Juan Domingo Perón (1973–1974). (Bottom row) María Estela Martínez de Perón (1974–1976), Lieutenant General Jorge Rafael Videla (1976–1981), Lieutenant General Roberto Eduardo Viola (1981), Lieutenant General Leopoldo Fortunato Galtieri (1981–1982) and Lieutenant General Reynaldo Bignone (1982–1983) (Public Domain).

The differences between the Azules and the Colorados had begun to dissolve during the Government of Arturo Illia. By 1966, the civilians and military who had signed up as Azules or Colorados agreed that the man who should represent them was Onganía, by means of a permanent civil-military dictatorship. When Onganía took over, many of the Colorados who had been forced into retirement regained their rank and were promoted retroactively. Many were appointed as Mayors in the provinces.

The military would continue in power, first with Lieutenant General Juan Carlos Onganía (1966–1970), then with Brigadier General Roberto Marcelo Levingston (1970–1971) and Lieutenant General Alejandro Agustín Lanusse (1971–1973). Democratic elections were held in 1973, with the Peronist Candidate Dr Héctor José Cámpora winning the presidency, who only governed for two months, resigning, and being replaced by Raúl Alberto Lastiri. New elections were held in which Lieutenant General Juan Domingo Perón accessed to his third Presidency. Perón governed until his death in July 1974, assuming the Presidency his wife, until then vice President, María Estela Martínez de Perón, who was overthrown by the military in March 1976, beginning the last stage of de facto military governments in Argentina, which ended in 1983.

APPENDICES

Table 9: Argentine Navy ships in the 1960s¹

Type	Pennant Nr.	Name	Ton	Crew
Aircraft Carrier	V-1	ARA <i>Independencia</i>	18,300	1,300
Light Cruiser	C-1	ARA <i>Almirante Brown</i>	8,600	600
Light Cruiser	C-2	ARA <i>Veinticinco de Mayo</i>	8,600	600
Light Cruiser	C-3	ARA <i>La Argentina</i>	8,632	800
Light Cruiser	C-4	ARA <i>General Belgrano</i>	12,650	868
Light Cruiser	C-5	ARA <i>Nueve de Julio</i>	13,430	1,100
Corvette	P-10	ARA <i>República</i>	1,375	154
Frigate	P-31	ARA <i>Hércules</i>	1,400	175
Frigate	P-32	ARA <i>Heroína</i>	1,400	175
Frigate	P-33	ARA <i>Sarandí</i>	2,320	175
Frigate	P-34	ARA <i>Santísima Trinidad</i>	1,400	175
Frigate	P-35	ARA <i>Azopardo</i>	1,220	170
Frigate	P-36	ARA <i>Piedra Buena</i>	1,220	170
Minesweeper	M-2	ARA <i>Drummond</i>	554	70
Minesweeper	M-3	ARA <i>Robinson</i>	554	70
Minesweeper	M-4	ARA <i>Granville</i>	554	70
Minesweeper	M-6	ARA <i>Pinedo</i>	550	50
Minesweeper	M-7	ARA <i>Bouchard</i>	520	70
Minesweeper	M-10	ARA <i>Py</i>	550	50
Minesweeper	M-11	ARA <i>Parker</i>	550	70
Minesweeper	M-12	ARA <i>Seaver</i>	550	70
Minesweeper	M-13	ARA <i>Spiro</i>	550	70
Destroyer	D-20	ARA <i>Brown</i>	3,030	250
Destroyer	D-22	ARA <i>Rosales</i>	3,892	200
Torpedo Ship/ Destroyer	T-1	ARA <i>Cervantes</i>	2,072	180
Torpedo Ship/ Destroyer	T-2	ARA <i>Juan de Garay</i>	2,072	180
Torpedo Ship/ Destroyer	T-3	ARA <i>Mendoza</i>	2,416	179
Torpedo Ship/ Destroyer	T-4	ARA <i>La Rioja</i>	2,370	196
Torpedo Ship/ Destroyer	T-5	ARA <i>Tucumán</i>	2,235	196
Torpedo Ship/ Destroyer	T-6	ARA <i>Buenos Aires</i>	1,950	200
Torpedo Ship/ Destroyer	T-7	ARA <i>Entre Ríos</i>	1,950	200
Torpedo Ship/ Destroyer	T-9	ARA <i>San Juan</i>	1,950	200
Torpedo Ship/ Destroyer	T-10	ARA <i>San Luis</i>	1,950	200
Torpedo Ship/ Destroyer	T-11	ARA <i>Misiones</i>	1,950	200

Table 9: Argentine Navy ships in the 1960s ¹ (continued)				
Torpedo Ship/ Destroyer	T-12	ARA <i>Santa Cruz</i>	1,950	200
Patrol Boat	P-20	ARA <i>Murature</i>	1,030	130
Patrol Boat	P-21	ARA <i>King</i>	,1030	130
PT Boat	P-80	ARA LT1	52	15
PT Boat	P-81	ARA LT2	52	15
PT Boat	P-82	ARA LT3 / <i>Towora</i>	52	15
PT Boat	P-83	ARA LT4	52	15
PT Boat	P-84	ARA LT5 / <i>Alakush</i>	52	15
PT Boat	P-85	ARA LT6	52	15
PT Boat	P-86	ARA LT7	52	15
PT Boat	P-87	ARA LT8	52	15
PT Boat	P-88	ARA LT9	52	15
Submarine	S-3	ARA <i>Salta</i>	920	64
Submarine	S-11	ARA <i>Santa Fé</i>	2,427	85
Submarine	S-12	ARA <i>Santiago del Estero</i>	1,816	85
Beacon Boat	Nr.1	ARA <i>Alférez MacKinlay</i>	700	50
Transport Ship	B-2	ARA <i>Bahía Aguirre</i>	5,308	100
Transport Ship	B-6	ARA <i>Bahía Buen Suceso</i>	5,305	100
Transport Ship	B-7	ARA <i>San Julián</i>	953	40
Transport Ship	B-8	ARA <i>Bahía Thetis</i>	5,225	100
Transport Ship	B-10	ARA <i>Lapataia</i>	6,000	100
Transport Ship	B-11	ARA <i>Le Maire</i>	6,000	100
Transport Ship	B-12	ARA <i>Les Eclaireurs</i>	6,000	100
Transport Ship	-	ARA <i>Beagle</i>	1,640	29
Hydrographic Boat	Q-7	ARA <i>Bahía Blanca</i>	970	92
Hydrographic Boat	-	ARA <i>Madryn</i>	970	92
Hydrographic Boat	Q-15	ARA <i>Cormorán</i>	99	21
Hydrographic Boat	RHF2 / A-8	ARA <i>Sanaviron</i>	800	50
Oceanographic Ship	Q-3	ARA <i>Capitán Cánepa</i>	1,250	70
LSM	Q-69	ARA BDM-1	?	?
LSM	Q-70	ARA BDM-2	?	?
LCIL	BDI-1 to BDI-15	-	380	20/25
LST	Q-41 / BDT-1	ARA <i>Cabo San Bartolomé</i>	8,000	50
LST	BDT-2	ARA <i>Cabo San Diego</i>	8,000	50
LST	BDT-3	ARA <i>Cabo San Francisco de Paula</i>	8,000	50
LST	BDT-4	ARA <i>Cabo San Gonzalo</i>	8,000	50
LST	BDT-6	ARA <i>Cabo San Isidro</i>	8,000	50
LST	BDT-7	ARA <i>Cabo San Pablo</i>	8,000	50
LST	Q-50 / BDT-10	ARA <i>Cabo San Pío</i>	8,000	50
LST	BDT-11	ARA <i>Cabo San Sebastian</i>	8,000	50
LST	BDT-12	-	8,000	50
LST	BDT-13	ARA <i>Cabo Buen Tiempo</i>	8,000	50
LST	BDT-14	ARA <i>Cabo San Vicente</i>	8,000	50
Ocean Tug	A-1	ARA <i>Comandante General Yrigoyen</i>	1,850	65
Ocean Tug	A-2	ARA <i>Comandante General Zapiola</i>	1,675	80
Ocean Tug	A-5	ARA <i>Diaguita</i>	814	50

Table 9: Argentine Navy ships in the 1960s¹ (continued)

Ocean Tug	A-6	ARA <i>Yamana</i>	800	50
Ocean Tug	A-7	ARA <i>Chiriguano</i>	800	50
Tug	R-6	ARA <i>Calchaqui</i>	75	5
Tug	R-7	ARA <i>Toba</i>	340	35
Tug	R-9	ARA <i>Ona</i>	620	30
Tug	R-10	ARA <i>Querandí</i>	620	30/35
Tug	R-29	ARA <i>Pehuénche</i>	330	14
Tug	R-30	ARA <i>Tonocote</i>	330	14
Tug	R-32	ARA <i>Quilmes</i>	355	14
Rescue Ship	-	ARA <i>Charrúa</i>	982	40
Rescue Ship	Q-18	ARA <i>Guardiamarina Zicari</i>	1,750	80
Presidential Yacht	Q-72	ARA <i>Tecucara</i>	295	10
Workshop Vessel	Q-21	ARA <i>Ingeniero Iribas</i>	4,080	120
Workshop Vessel	Q-22	ARA <i>Ingeniero Gadda</i>	4,080	120
Gasoline Tanker	B-16	ARA <i>Punta Delgada</i>	6,187	90
Gasoline Tanker	B-18	ARA <i>Punta Médanos</i>	16,300	140
Gasoline Tanker	B-21	ARA <i>Punta Alta</i>	1,900	40
Gasoline Tanker	-	ARA <i>Punta Cigueña</i>	2,253	37
Gasoline Tanker	-	ARA <i>Punta Loyola</i>	6,300	90
Floating Dock	Y-1	-	3,500	31

Table 10: Argentine Armed Forces Ranks (Officers)²

Argentine Army	Argentine Navy	Argentine Air Force
Teniente General (Lieutenant General)	Almirante (Admiral)	Brigadier General (Brigadier General)
General de División (Major General)	Vicealmirante (Vice Admiral)	Brigadier Mayor (Brigadier Major)
General de Brigada (Brigadier General)	Contraalmirante (Rear Admiral)	Brigadier (Brigadier)
Coronel Mayor (Colonel Major)	Comodoro de Marina (Commodore of the Navy)	Comodoro Mayor (Commodore Major)
Coronel (Colonel)	Capitán de Navío (Captain)	Comodoro (Commodore)
Teniente Coronel (Lieutenant Colonel)	Capitán de Fragata (Commander)	Vicecomodoro (Vice Commodore)
Mayor (Major)	Capitán de Corbeta (Lieutenant Commander)	Mayor (Major)
Capitán (Captain)	Teniente de Navío (Ship Lieutenant)	Capitán (Captain)
Teniente Primero (1st Lieutenant)	Teniente de Fragata (Frigate Lieutenant)	Primer Teniente (1st Lieutenant)
Teniente (Lieutenant)	Teniente de Corbeta (Corvette Lieutenant)	Teniente (Lieutenant)
Subteniente (Sub-Lieutenant)	Guardiamarina (Midshipman)	Alférez (Ensign)

Table 11: Argentine Armed Forces Ranks (NCOs) ³		
Argentine Army	Argentine Navy	Argentine Air Force
Sub Oficial Mayor (Chief Warrant Officer)	Sub Oficial Mayor (Master Chief Petty Officer)	Sub Oficial Mayor (Chief Warrant Officer)
Sub Oficial Principal (Deputy Chief Officer)	Sub Oficial Principal (Deputy Chief Officer)	Sub Oficial Principal (Deputy Chief Officer)
Sargento Ayudante (Assistant Sergeant)	Sub Oficial Primero (Chief Warrant Officer)	Sub Oficial Ayudante (Assistant Chief Officer)
Sargento Primero (First Sergeant)	Sub Oficial Segundo (2nd Chief Warrant Officer)	Sub Oficial Auxiliar (Auxiliary Chief Officer)
Sargento (Sergeant)	Cabo Principal (Chief Corporal)	Cabo Principal (Chief Corporal)
Cabo Primero (First Corporal)	Cabo Primero (First Corporal)	Cabo Primero (First Corporal)
Cabo (Corporal)	Cabo Segundo (Second Corporal)	Cabo Segundo (Second Corporal)

Table 12: Argentine Armed Forces ranks (Troops) ⁴		
Argentine Army	Argentine Navy	Argentine Air Force
Cadete (Cadet)	Cadete (Cadet)	Cadete (Cadet)
Aspirante (Aspirant)	Aspirante (Aspirant)	Aspirante (Aspirant)
Dragoneante (Dragoneant)	Dragoneante (Dragoneant)	Dragoneante (Dragoneant)
Soldado (Soldier)	Conscripto (Conscript)	Soldado (Soldier)

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Antonio Luis Sapienza Fracchia was born in Asunción, Paraguay on 14 May 1960. He graduated from the Catholic University of Asunción where he got a B.A. in Clinical Psychology. He also took specialised English courses at Tulane University of New Orleans, Louisiana, and teaching methodology at San Diego State University in California. He is retired but had previously worked for 40 years as an English Teacher and one of the Academic Coordinators at the Centro Cultural Paraguayo-Americano (CCPA), a binational institute in Asunción. Married with two children, he resides in the Capital. He is an Aviation Historian who has written more than 500 articles in specialised magazines and on web pages on Paraguayan Aviation history and has given numerous lectures in schools, universities, institutes, military and civil institutions in Paraguay and abroad. Since 2010, he has been an aviation history professor to the Paraguayan Air Force (FAP). He has published 20 books since 1996, this one being his eighth with Helion. He received a total of six decorations for his academic merits, two from Argentina, one from Brazil and three from his own country, Paraguay.

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Chapter 4

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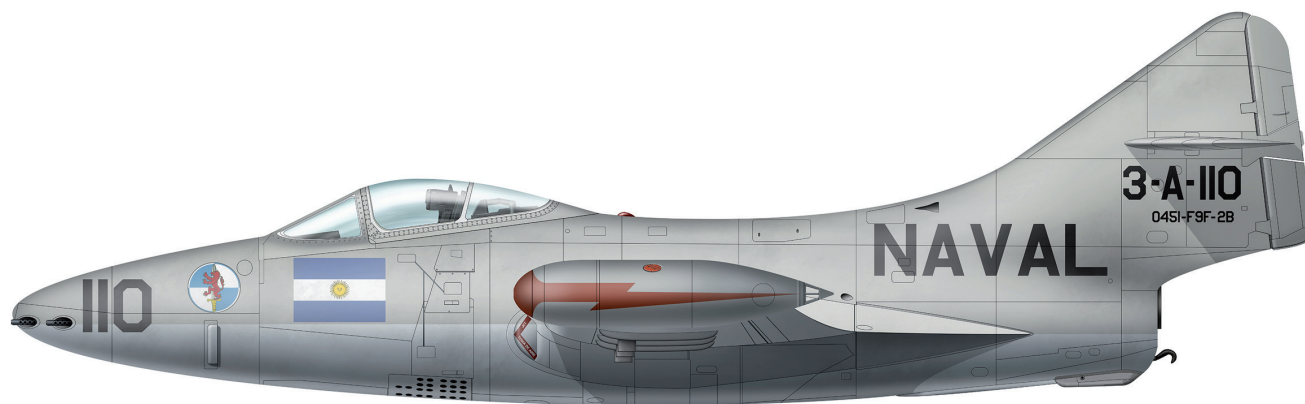
Starting in 1947, the Command of (Argentine) Naval Aviation (COAN) acquired a total of 94 North American AT-6A/B/C/ and SNJ-3/4 Texans and 30 SNJ-5C, and they remained in service until 1970. The majority was assigned to the Training (and General Purpose) and Light Attack Squadrons, and a number served as advanced trainers on board of the aircraft carrier *ARA Independencia* (V-1). They could be armed with one or two Browning M2 machine guns (in pods), and one or two 100kg bombs. Regardless of the sub-variant, all were painted in overall silver finish, and some had their spinners painted in red. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)



Starting in 1956, the COAN acquired a total of 26 Vought F4U fighter-bombers in different variants. All were assigned to Naval Aviation Attack Squadron Nr.2, which operated them in two groups: one specialised in daytime operations, and the other in night time operations. Both regularly flew from the aircraft carrier *ARA Independencia*. This example, left in midnight blue overall, was one of 12 F4U-5NLs assigned to the group specialised in night-time operations, and is shown as armed with eight unguided 127mm rockets on underwing hard points. (Artwork by Jean-Marie Guillou)



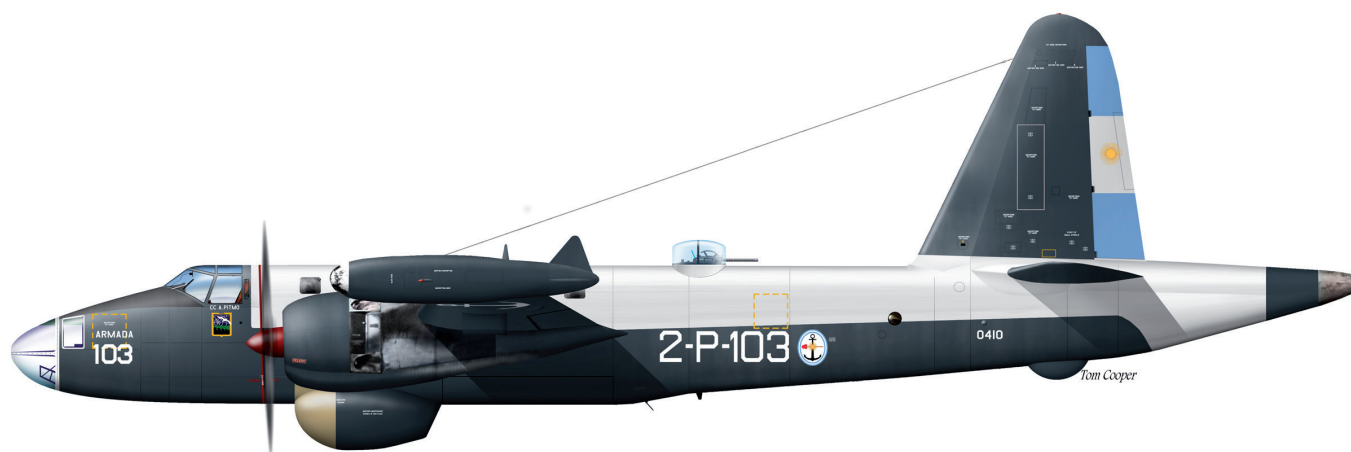
Except for four additional F-4U-5N/NLs that were never flown but served as sources of spares, the remaining 12 F4U-5s of the COAN were operated by the day-operations group of Naval Aviation Attack Squadron Nr.2. They were painted overall in gull-grey, with a large 'anti-glare panel' along the upper fuselage, and large surfaces painted in black down the side of the fuselage, to cover exhaust stains. Except for external armament, which included up to 910kg of bombs or rockets, or two drop tanks, all the F-4U-5s were armed with four internally installed 20mm Browning machine guns. This aircraft was also shot down during an air strike on the Magdalena Tank Regiment, on 2 April, and its pilot bailed out safely. (Artwork by Jean-Marie Guillou)



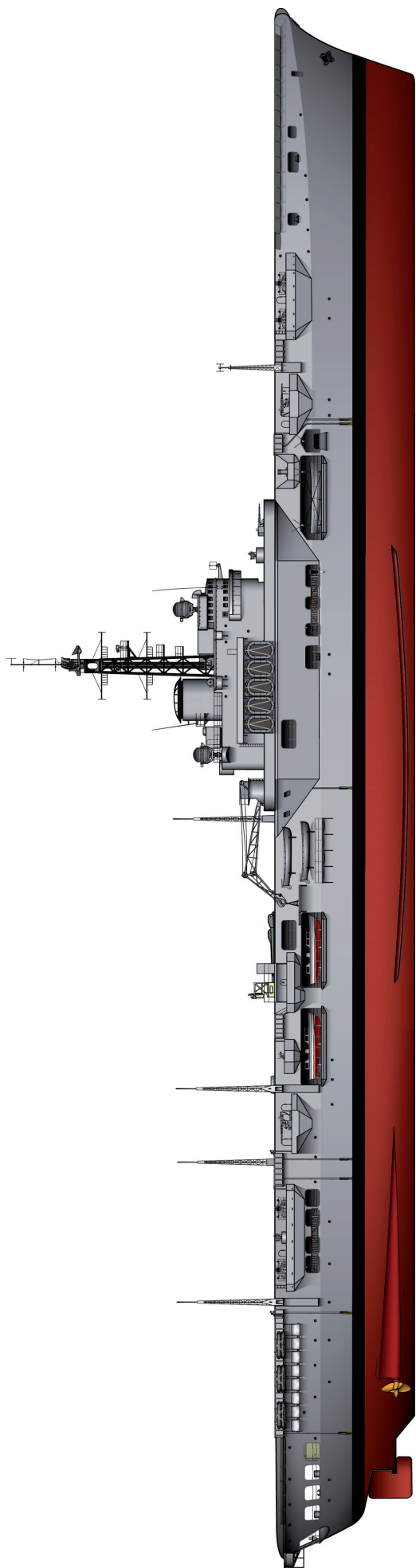
Starting in late 1957, the COAN acquired 28 Grumman F9F-2B Panther fighter-bombers. While four have served as sources of spares, the others were assigned to Naval Aviation Attack Squadron Nr.1, before being transferred, in 1959, to the Naval Aviation Squadron Nr.3 at Punta Indio. Although capable of operations from aircraft carriers, they were not embarked on ARA *Independencia*, because that ship's sole catapult proved to be underpowered. Their primary armament consisted of four 20mm Browning machine guns. Six of Argentina's Panthers were destroyed during air force's attacks on BAN Punta Indo, while one was damaged beyond repair. (Artwork by Jean-Marie Guillou)



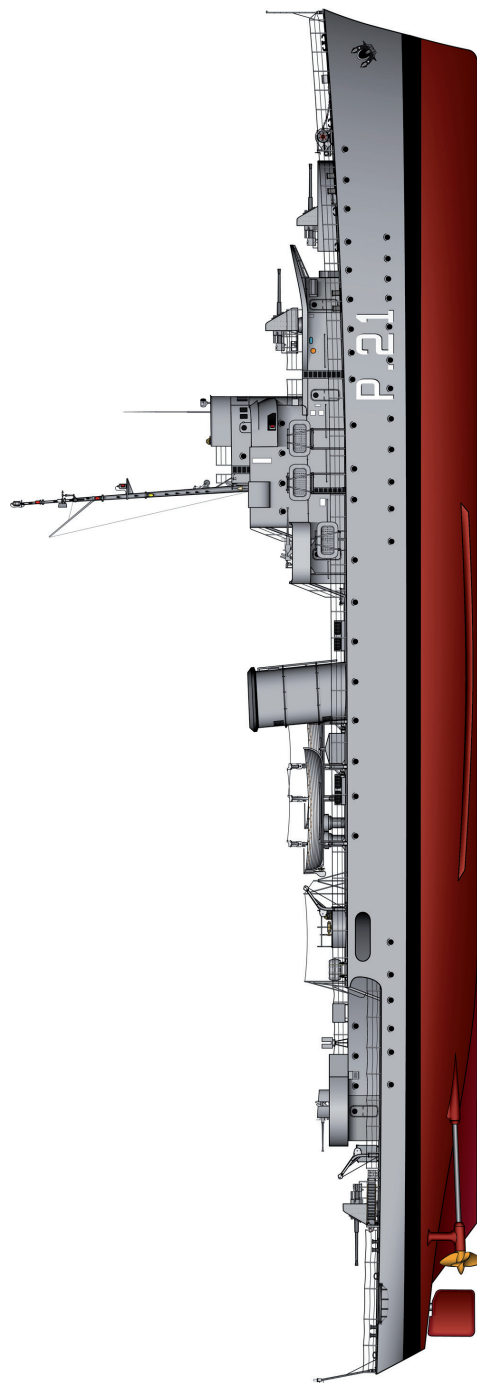
Lacking a suitable jet conversion trainer, the COAN originally had its pilots trained to fly jets on Lockheed T-33s in Uruguay. In 1962, a solution was found in the purchase of two F9F-8T Cougars from the USA (together with first six Grumman S-2A Trackers). Both survived the clashes of 1962–1963, and served until 1970, by when one of the two (3-A-151/0516) had become the first Argentine aircraft to pass the sound barrier. (Artwork by Jean-Marie Guillou)



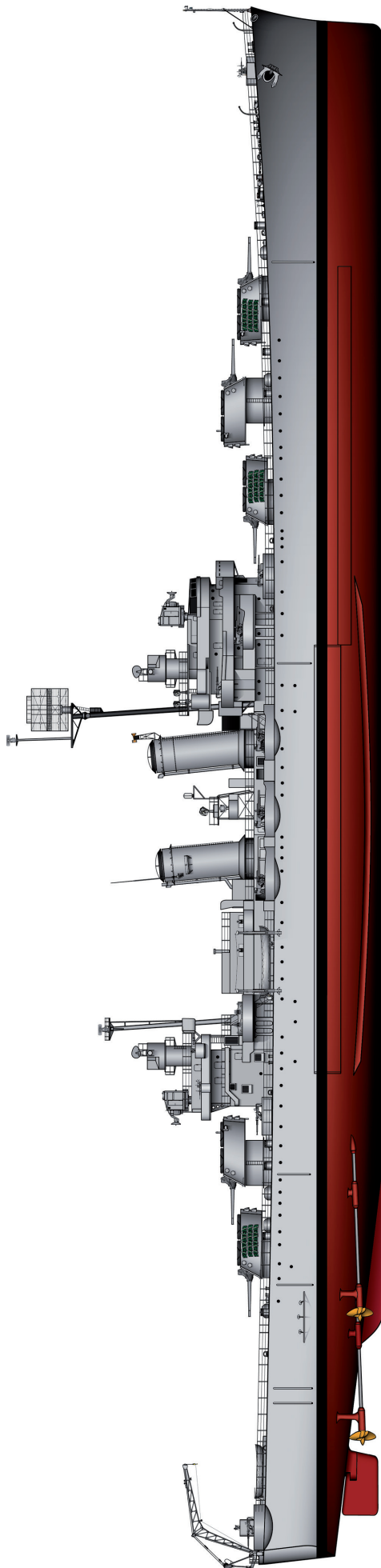
The Argentine Navy acquired its first Lockheed Neptunes in 1958, in the form of second-hand P2V-5s acquired from the surplus stocks of the Royal Air Force. All underwent an overhaul and upgrade in The Netherlands and were then assigned to Naval Aviation Reconnaissance Squadron Nr.1. The aircraft shown here, 2-P-103, flew a clandestine reconnaissance mission at low altitude over the Falklands, on 12 June 1961. On 2 April 1963, two P2Vs flew an air strike on the positions of the Infantry Regiment Nr.3 in La Tablada, before their crews took refuge in Uruguay. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)



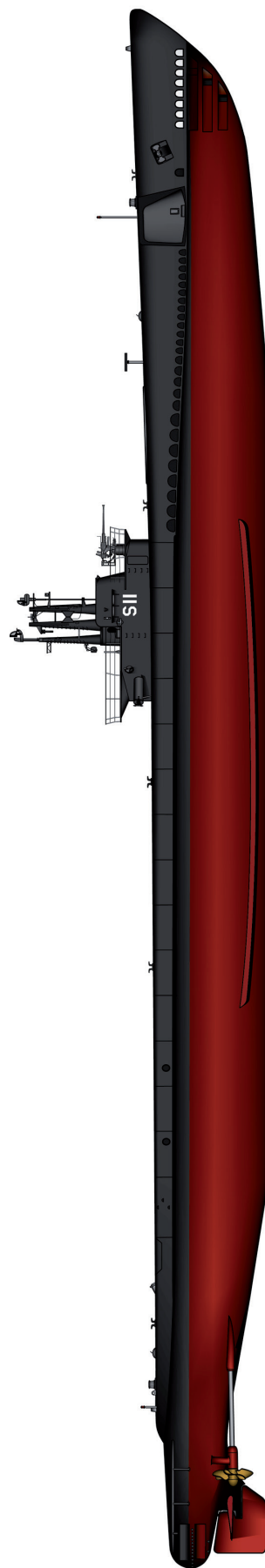
The *Colossus*-class aircraft carrier ARA *Independencia* (V-1) was the first aircraft carrier of the Argentine Navy. Although designed and constructed during the Second World War, this ship was built to commercial standards, and at 19,000 tons displacement, relatively small. Moreover, the entire class suffered from machinery-related problems. Originally constructed as HMS *Warrior*, and after serving with the Royal Canadian Navy as HMCS *Warrior*, it was purchased by Buenos Aires in 1958 and remained in active service until 1969. ARA *Independencia* could carry up to 30 aircraft, including F4U-5s, AT-6/SNJ-5s, Grumman S-2A Trackers, and Bell 47G helicopters. (Artwork by Ivan Zajac)



The *Muratore*-class patrol boat ARA *King* (P-21), was commissioned into service with the Argentine Navy in 1946. Originally classified as a minelayer, it displaced 1,030 tons, had a crew of 130, and was armed with three 105mm guns and four 40mm Bofors automatic anti-aircraft guns. It was named after Juan King, an Argentine naval officer that served in the Cisplatine War, and was the third vessel to carry this name. In 1955, ARA *King* took part in the *Revolucion Libertadora*, and then saw more action during the clashes of 1962–1963. Overhauled in 2015–2018, at the time of writing she remains in service as the oldest vessel of the Argentine Navy. (Artwork by Ivan Zajac)



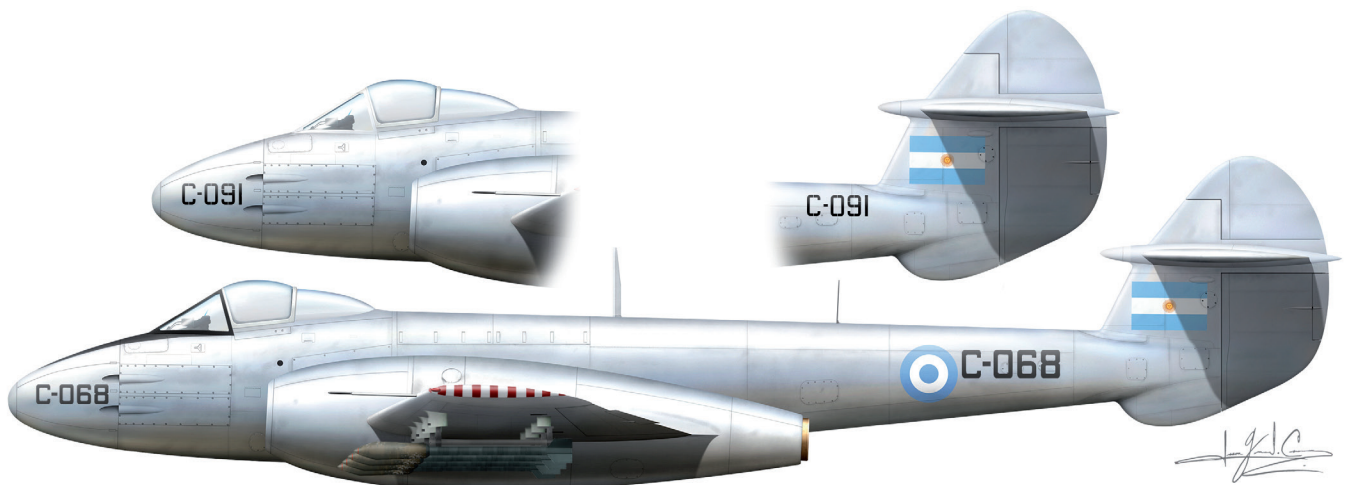
The *Brooklyn*-class light cruiser ARA *General Belgrano* (C-4) was probably one of most famous warships of the Argentine Navy in the 1950s–1980s period. Originally constructed as USS *Phoenix*, and a survivor of the Pearl Harbour attack in 1941, it was sold to Argentina in 1951 and became ARA *17 de Octubre*: the name was changed after the *Revolucion Libertadora* of 1955. The ship displaced 12,403 tons on maximum load and had a crew of 975–1,100. It was armed with 16 160mm guns, 8 130mm guns, and eight 13mm machine guns – most of these were still on board as of 1962–1963, as shown here. (Artwork by Ivan Zajac)



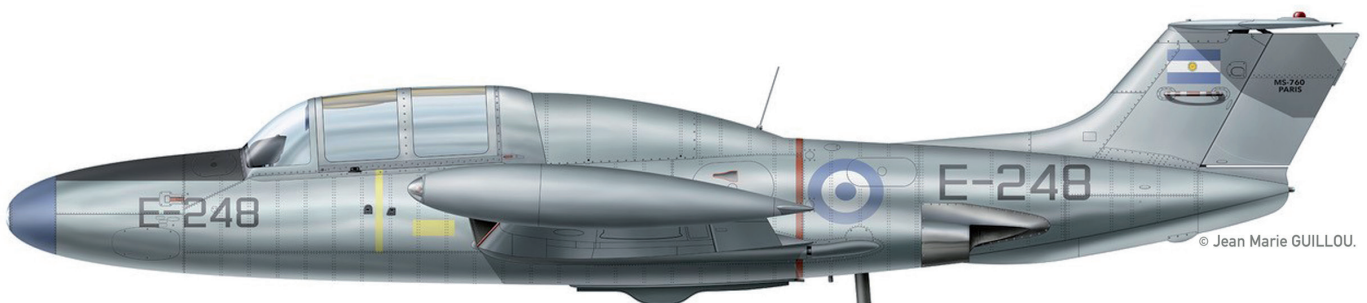
Constructed in 1945 as USS *Macabi* (ISS-375), this submarine of the *Balao*-class was one of two transferred to Argentina in 1960. Renamed ARA *Santa Fe* (S-11); her sister-ship USS *Lamprey* was renamed ARA *Santiago del Estero*, S-12), it entered service in November of the same year. Displacing 1,526 tons on the surface and 2,426 when submerged, it was crewed by 66. Armament included ten 533mm torpedo tubes; six at the bow and four at the stern. The vessel was originally equipped with a single 127mm Bofors gun and one 40mm Bofors gun, as shown here, but the former was removed upon arrival in Argentina. (Artwork by Ivan Zajac)



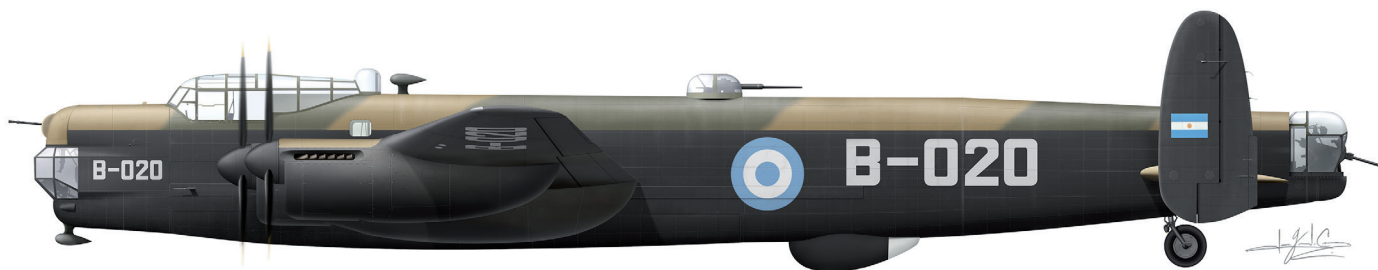
A total of 28 North American F-86F-30NA Sabre fighter-bombers were in service with the Fuerza Aérea Argentina (Argentine Air Force) in 1960–1986. All were operated by the Fighter-Bomber Group Nr.1 (CB-1), IV Air Brigade, from BAM El Plumerillo. Their principal armament consisted of six 12.7mm Colt-Browning machine guns, installed in the forward fuselage. Inboard, underwing hard points could take bombs of 50kg, 125kg, or 250kg, or 250kg napalm canisters, while for smaller installations underneath outboard portions of the wing could take unguided rockets or, as illustrated here, SUU-14/A tubes for dispersion of bomblets. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)



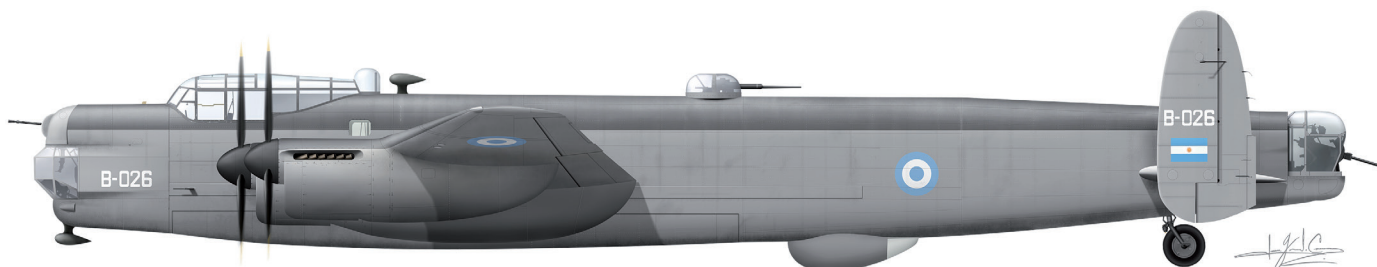
A large number of surviving Gloster Meteor F.Mk 4s (out of 100 acquired in 1947), remained in service until 1970: all with Fighter Aviation Regiments Nr.4 and Nr.6 at the BAM Tandil, latter on with the Fighter-Bomber Groups Nr.2 and Nr.3 (CB-2 and CB-3) of VII Air Brigade. Their principal armament was four internally installed 20mm Hispano Suiza guns. However, they could also carry two 250kg bombs, or up to 16 SCAR or T-10 unguided rockets, installed on rails under their wing-tips, as illustrated on the main artwork. (Artwork by Luca Canossa)



The Argentine Air Force acquired no less than 48 Moraine-Saulnier MS.760 advanced trainers and light attack aircraft, starting in 1958. They were assigned to the Fighter-Bomber Groups Nr.2 and Nr.3 (CB-2 and CB-3, respectively), IV Air Brigade both based at BAM El Plumerillo, outside Mendoza. This type served at the Military Aviation School in Córdoba, too. The Paris could be armed with two underwing pods containing two 7.62mm machine guns each. Additionally, they could carry either ALKAN-made launchers for either three 50kg bombs, or Matra 61/5 launchers for three T-10 or Matra Type 122, or seven SNEB 68 unguided rockets. (Artwork by Jean-Marie Guillou)



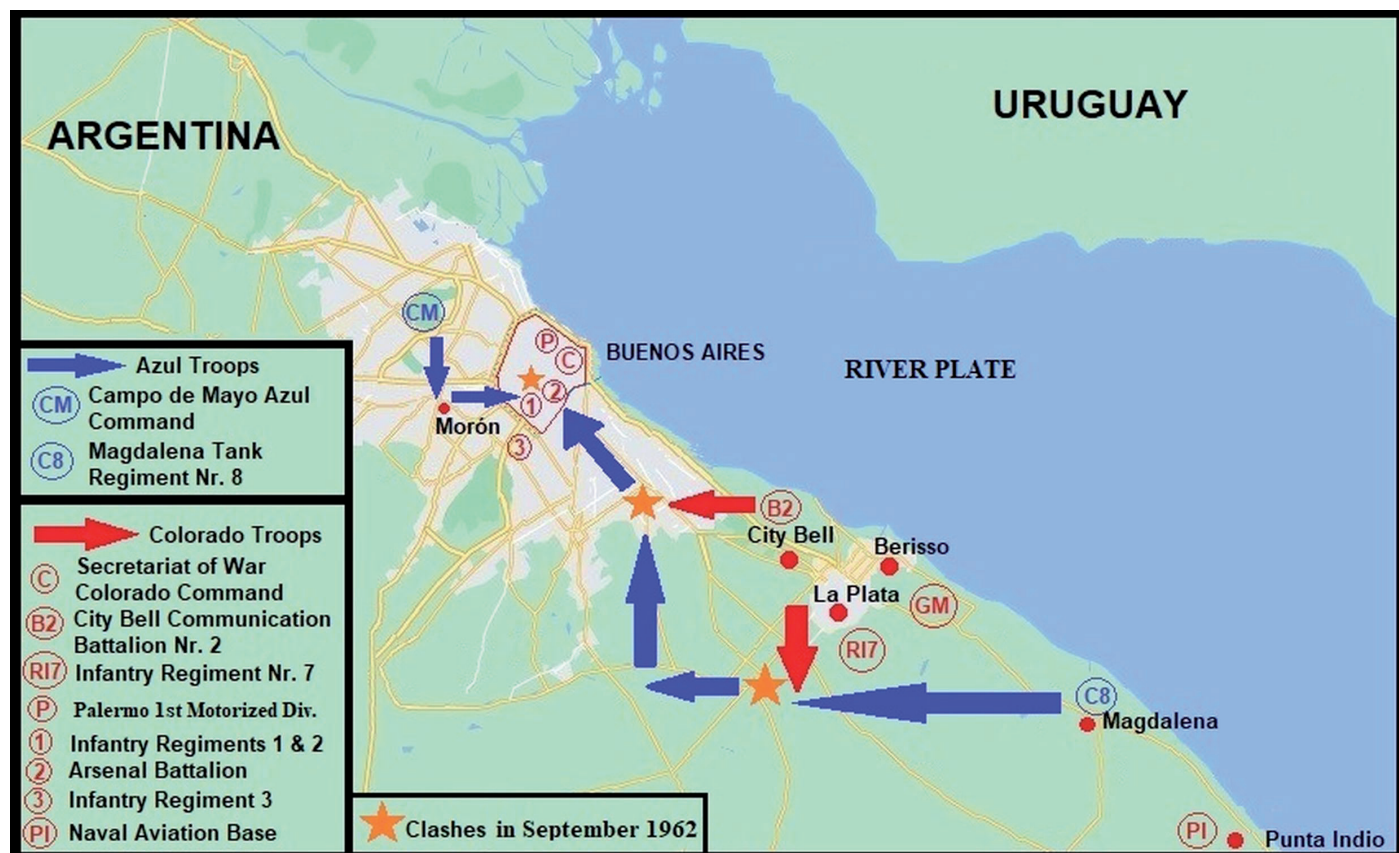
About 20 out of 30 Avro 694 Lincoln B.Mk II bombers acquired from Great Britain in the late 1940s, were still in service in 1962–1964, and they still played an active role – both in peace-time, routine operations, in support of scientific enterprises, and also in the course of the clashed between the Azules and Colorados. Some still wore their original camouflage pattern in dark brown and dark green on upper surfaces, even if this was often washed out by the sun and rain. (Artwork by Luca Canossa)



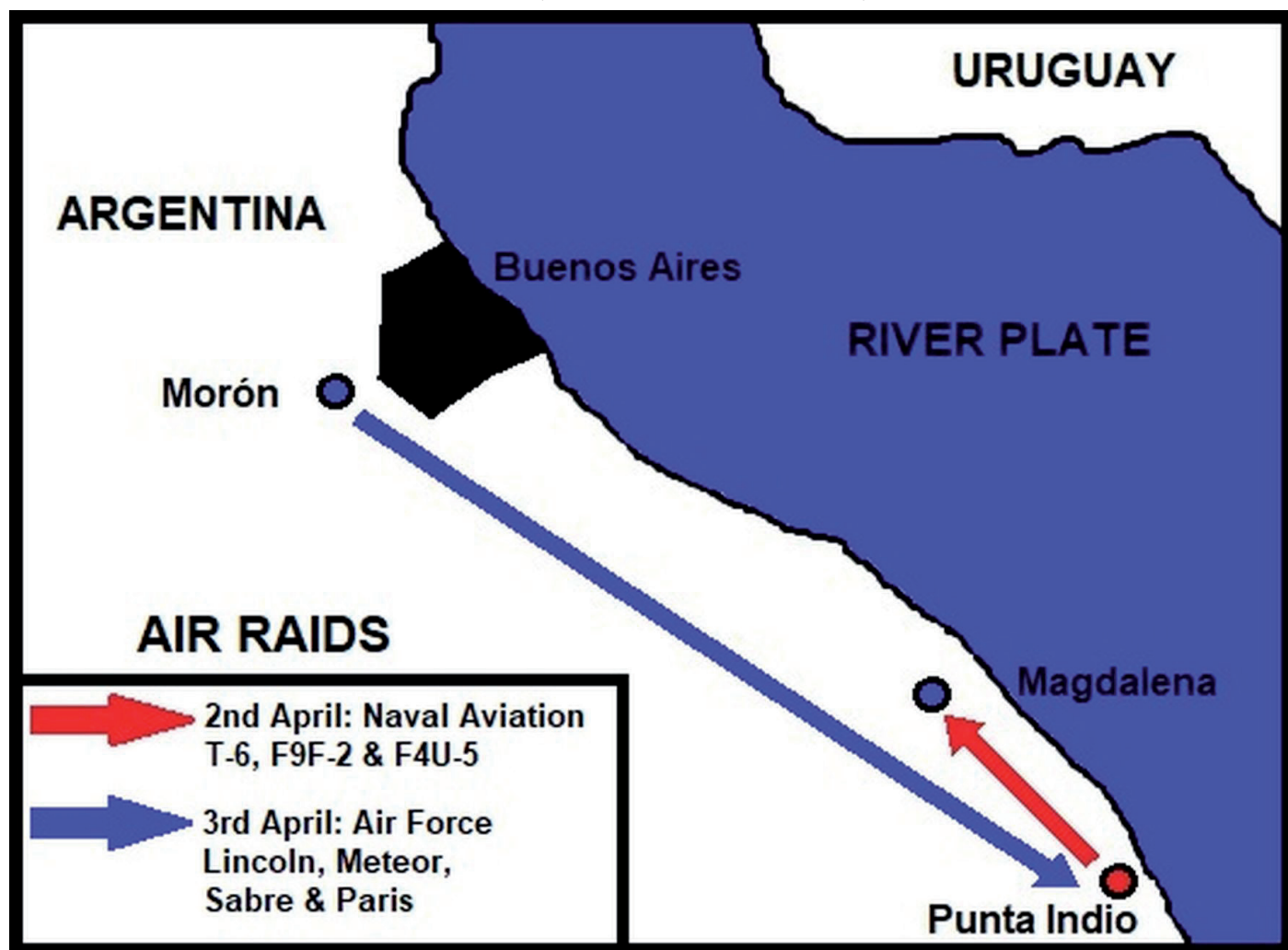
As of 1962, all the Argentinean Lincoln B.Mk II bombers were still operated by Bombardment Group Nr.1, V Air Brigade, based at BAM Coronel Pringles. Some of locally-overhauled examples were repainted in a two-tone grey camouflage pattern. Notably, throughout their service, they retained all the original armament, including the capability to load 9,979kg of bombs into the internal bomb bay, and six 7.7mm Vickers machine guns for self-defence. (Artwork by Luca Canossa)



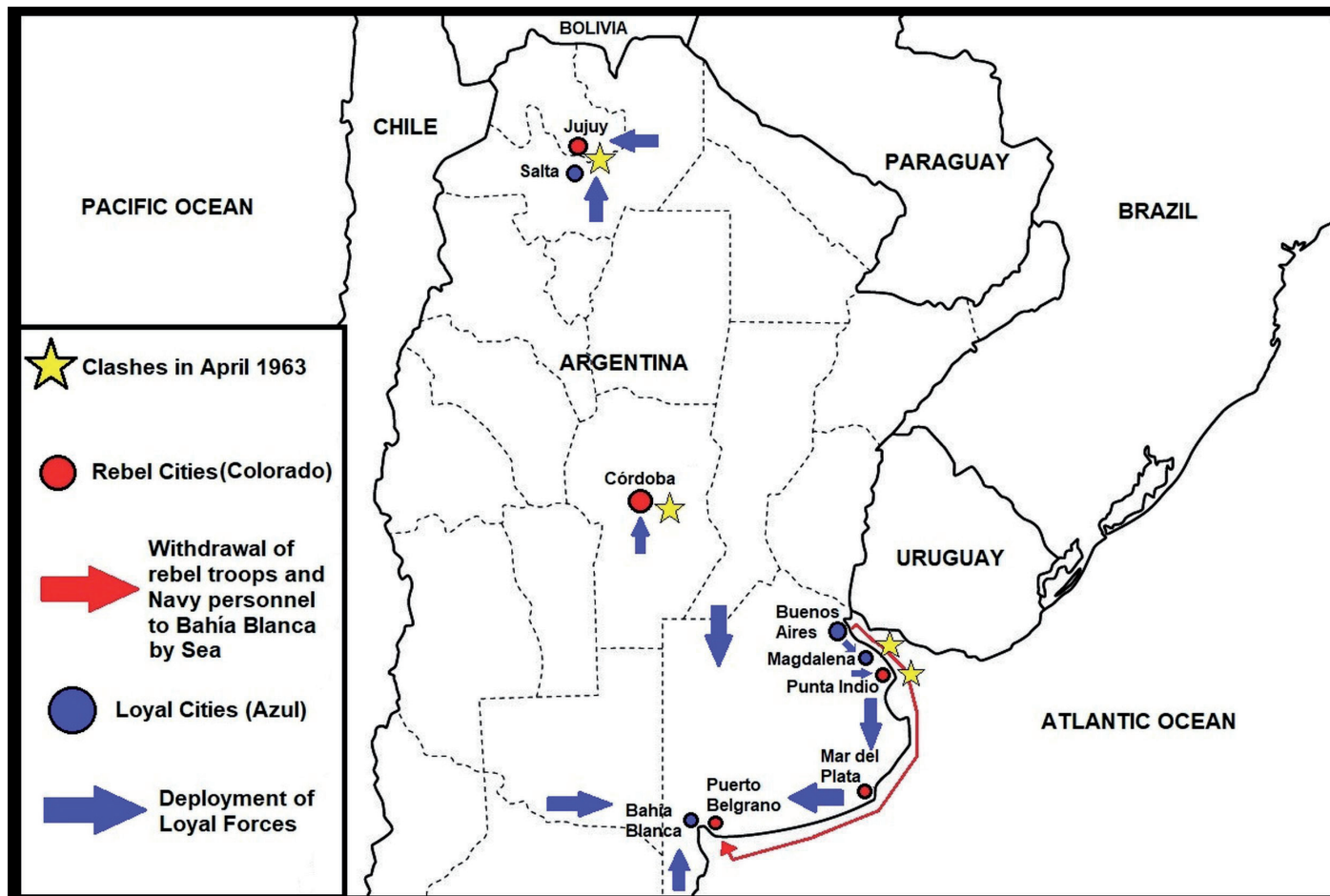
Starting in 1961, the Argentine Air Force acquired a total of 58 North American T-28A training aircraft. In Argentinean service, they received the nickname 'Pepin Cascaron', and were evenly distributed between the Air Brigade Nr.1 and the Military Aviation School. However, the T-28s were already in poor condition on delivery, and soon began to develop extensive maintenance problems. The bulk of the fleet was therefore withdrawn from service in 1964–1965, and replaced by Beech T-34 Mentor. This T-28A was one of only six that remained in service until 1967. (Artwork by Tom Cooper)



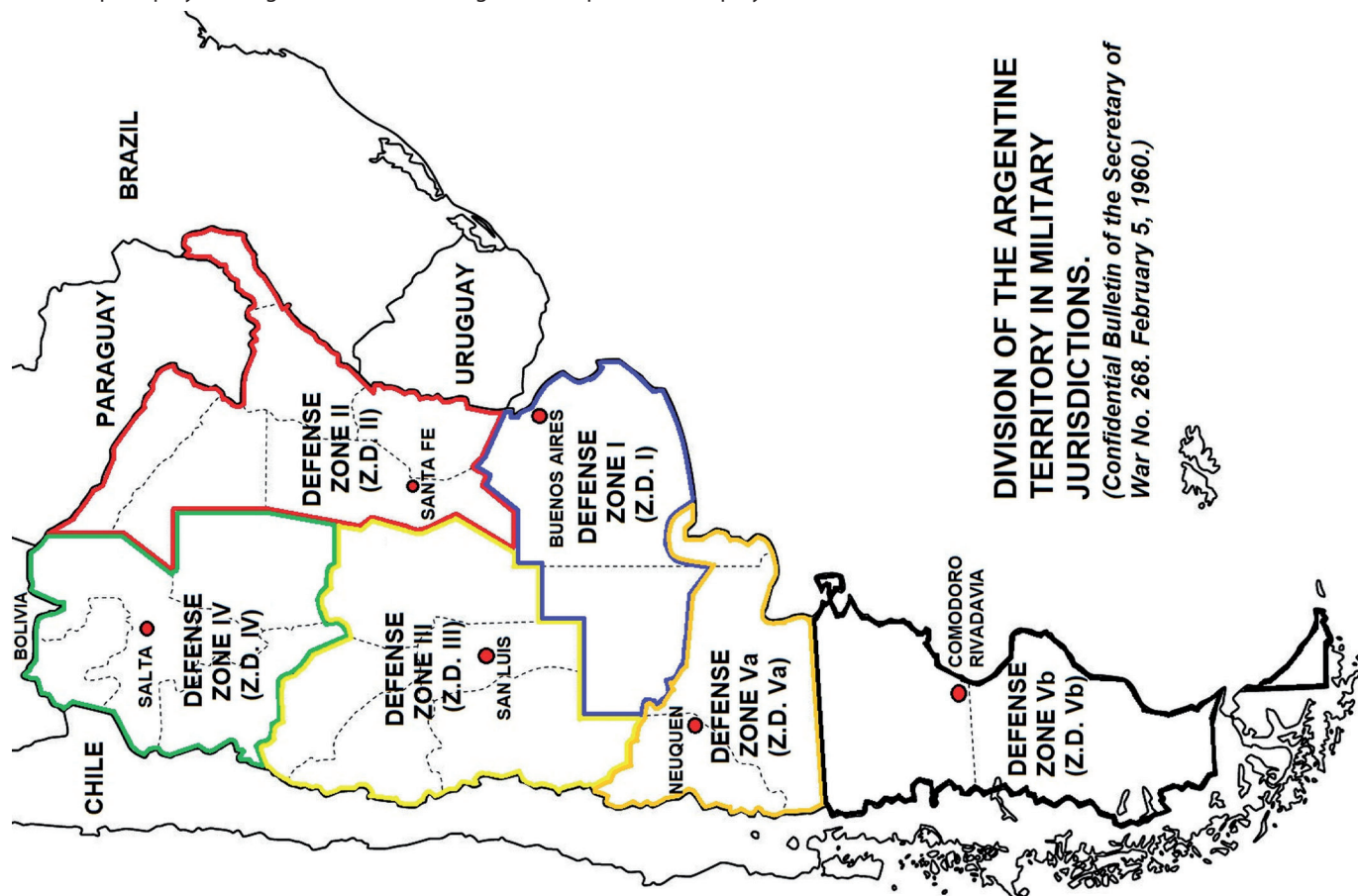
The map above shows the Azul and Colorado troops deployments in September 1962. (Map by author)



In April 1963, both factions, Azules and Colorados, carried out Air Raids against each other. (Map by author)



Azul troops deployment against Colorado strongholds in April 1963. (Map by author)



Defense Zones for the CONINTES plan of the Argentine territory in the 1960s. (Map by author).



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'Azules y Colorados' is the name originally using to designate two parties in a hypothetical scenarios during an exercise. In 1962-1963, it provided the name for a series of armed confrontations between two branches of the Argentine Armed Forces. Both took place during the de facto presidency of José María Guido and aimed to settle the struggle between the top ranks of the Argentine military, and determine its future position in the state and society.

All branches of the Argentine armed forces have shared the country's alignment with the United States of America in the Cold War and the need to combat communism, but they were in disagreement regarding the attitude vis-à-vis the ideology of Peronism and the professional profile that the Armed Forces. The Azules proposed a limited integration of Peronism into Argentine political life and armed forces with a high degree of autonomy, though unified through a strict chain of command. The Colorados equated Peronism with Communism, advocating the complete eradication of both, and were characterized by a greater politicization of the military and deliberative inner workings. By 1962, each wing was fighting to gain control over the entire Armed Forces and thus be in a position to

exercise guardianship over the government and set the course that national policy should follow. Politically, the radicals of the people (Balbinistas) were closer to the Colorados, while the intransigent radicals (Frondistas) were closer to the Azules.

The confrontation between the two groups was expressed in several episodes and two armed clashes, the first that took place between 16 and 18 September 1962, and the second between 2 and 5 April 2 1963. The military files registered the death of 24 combatants on both sides, while 87 were wounded, all of them in the second confrontation. Eyewitnesses reported the existence of several additional dead and wounded in both confrontations, most of them civilians, but this was never officially confirmed – although especially the participation of civilians on the Colorados side was confirmed and remains well-known. Eventually, clashes for April 1963 resulted in the Azules – led by General Juan Carlos Onganía – establishing themselves in a position of dominance over all the branches of the armed forces, supported by both civilian and ecclesiastical sectors of the society, the so-called 'Military Party'.

Azules y Colorados is the first military history ever of that conflict: richly illustrated with authentic photography and custom-drawn colour profiles and maps, it is an indispensable source of reference about one of crucial moments in Argentine's history.



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